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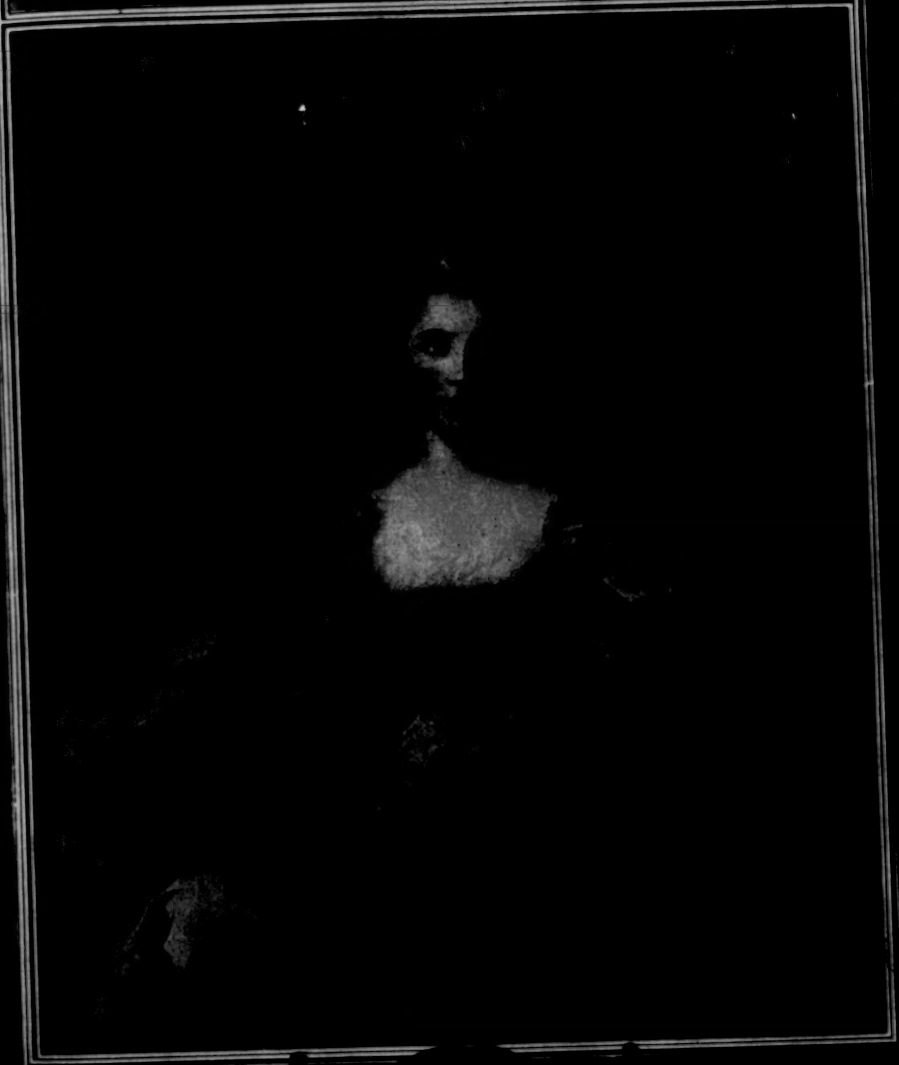

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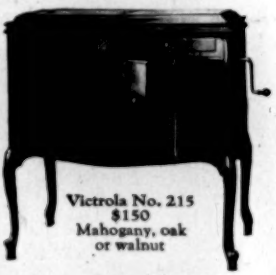

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THE GIRL IN THE TREE

BY ALICE BROWN

(This story was awarded First Prize in the first quarterly competition of the 1924 Short Story Contest conducted by HARPER'S MAGAZINE. More than three thousand stories were submitted in the competition. Those selected by the Editors as available for publication were sent to the Judges, Meredith Nicholson, Zona Gale, and Bliss Perry, who listed their individual preferences in order, without consulting one another and without knowing the identity of the authors. No other story was ranked as high by all three Judges.—*Editor's Note.*)

THE thing that couldn't happen is the thing that does. Will anybody believe it? Let us see.

The Blakesleys—not all Blakesley in name, but Blakesley by birth—had gathered at the family mansion that has stood for over two hundred years in unchanged dignity in one of our academy towns. They had assembled for the funeral services of its last owner, Mrs. Amory Blakesley—known among them as Cousin Sabrina—and now, four days later, they were staying on, as if the knowledge of the will she had left had paralyzed their nerve centers and they actually couldn't go. Old Maggie, the "help"—not much over fifty, but old in the sense of faithfulness—and Martin, the man of all work, similarly brevetted, were furious in a dumb, lowering way. To them it seemed as if the Blakesleys, who had never been warmly welcome here in Madam Blakesley's lifetime, had camped down for good, and that it would take an earthquake or some such expedient of God's providence to blast them out. It required all the tact and resolute argument of Mary Gorham, Madam Blakesley's companion, to keep them in order. Mary had herself been here only a couple of years, but she had become, on her first quiet entrance, the angel in the house, and she was still its moving pulse. Now she also was staying on because the cousins took it for granted and even commanded it, and she, who had a direct sense of values but no suspicion of ulterior motives, innocently wondered why.

Perhaps the cousins, who were not given to mental analysis, wondered in an equal degree why they felt obliged to keep a detaining finger on her, though, to a man and woman, they knew they

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must. But in some corner of each mind, unconfessed—since a Blakesley had to guard his self-respect—was the conviction that since Madam Blakesley, after trifling legacies to all the cousins and generous ones to Martin and Maggie, had made young John Blakesley, an unconsidered cousin out of the West, her residuary legatee, Mary, in the house at the date when the will was made, might have some idea how it came about. Cousin Sabrina must have been bamboozled in some fashion by this John, and they could only manipulate Mary to find out how the bamboozling was done. John had been living in California with his invalid mother—who had recently died—and it was not long before that he had come on to see Cousin Sabrina with the perfectly transparent purpose of doing the bamboozling. And he was coming again now. Mary said she had written him when Madam Blakesley became suddenly worse. Had she written him at Madam Blakesley's request? a cousin inquired sharply. Oh, yes, Mary said, quite unmoved by the tone. After that one time of seeing him, Madam Blakesley had really fretted to see him again.

And now they were waiting supper for him, all the cousins, sitting round the library in a semicircular formation that was in itself threatening. There was Cousin Jos, the head of the clan, long past seventy now, the dry skin of his emaciated face stretched like parchment over a bony framework noticeably Greek, and his raiment so exquisite of tone and cut that one might have believed him to be given over to the worship of his fading body. Everything about him was aggressively fastidious. He even walked delicately, but that, Cousin Harriet said ruthlessly, was because his frontal arches had given way. So he got no credit there. Cousin Harriet, who was Mrs. Frye, a robust, protruding woman, inevitably suggested to eyes acquainted with bygone fashions a conformity to tight shiny basques over her abundant bosom, the waving of fringes and glitter of jet. But she conformed bravely to modern styles, though under her floating chiffon you still felt the presence of a corseted bulwark, like immovable masonry blurred by a cloud.

There was Bridgie, her son, a weedy young man who had led a breakneck career from landscape painting to flame-colored verse and a freak magazine where he could say his say which other editors brutally denied him; and there was Milicent, frankly an old maid, caring neither for clothes in their changing tyranny, nor, it seemed, for anything short of the Ideal. She had had many philanthropic enthusiasms, which she took like infectious diseases. Now she was on the side of World Peace, to be attained by persuading the lamb, in all circumstances, to lie down with four legs in the air when he saw the lion hurtling toward him and just see what the lion would say to that. None of the Blakesleys agreed with her here, being all frankly belligerent in their public as well as their private predilections, and Milicent, after sessions of fulminating argument with one after another, ceased speaking to them.

Probably there never was a lover of peace in its dovelike form as it floats in the empyrean more frankly hostile to individual divergence of opinion than Milicent. And now she sat in this encampment of Blakesleys, a spare, delicate figure, her eyes burning under heavy brows, her handsome mouth slightly curled at the corners, her equally handsome nose contemptuous, but her fine hands folded in such persistent quiet that you suspected them. You wondered what they were really prepared to do, those hands, to the misguided fools who tried to manipulate the world in a fashion different from their own. The cruder members of the clan were wont to declare, when her name came up in conclave, that Milicent had never forgotten the old days when she and Jos had been so madly in love with each other and the family had

Drawn by C. Clyde Squires

BRIDGIE TOUCHED HER ARM. "THERE, THERE, MUM," SAID HE, "SIT DOWN"

stepped in and quashed the idea of marriage. That, they said, and not differing ideals, had sealed her lips to all Blakesleys. They understood perfectly that her willingness to consult with them on the topic of Cousin Sabrina's will was to be accepted as merely an armed truce. The emergency over, she would cease speaking to them again.

The cousins had not delayed supper from any welcoming impulse toward John, but because they had tacitly determined to be with him from the first. He must not be allowed a period of delay to prepare his own case, or, more vital still, to consult with Mary Gorham. For Mary Gorham was really a dominant figure in their minds. Mrs. Frye spoke.

"Suppose we have Miss Gorham in? We haven't actually questioned her yet."

"Yes," returned Cousin Jos, in the distinguished voice he had formed long ago in traveling abroad, chiefly with reference to the vowel "a." "By all means have her in."

Mrs. Frye rose and looked helplessly about the wall, as if there ought to be a bell, though she knew there wasn't. On this Bridgie, throwing off his languor, came to his feet.

"I'll get her," said he. "She's a peach. Mary's a peach."

He left the room with his long stride, and an obscure cousin in the corner inquired, in a shocked tone:

"Cousin Harriet, do you think he calls her by her first name?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Frye, in the wearied perplexity she could easily be made to feel about Bridgie, who cheerfully met nobody's expectations, "he calls everybody by their first names."

"A peach!" commented Cousin Milicent, to herself, in a voice that suggested clingstones, very hard and green. "A peach!"

But Bridgie was back again following Mary, for whom he held the door with a suggestion of ceremony mildly irritating to the cousins, who knew her now for an important element in the house, as in the immediate past, and dangerous. She paused and looked at them inquiringly and Bridgie ostentatiously drew forward a chair. Mary Gorham was a slender girl with an odd clarity of loveliness which lay chiefly in her dark-lashed gray eyes. They were eyes that, unchallenged, looked merely wistful as if they found life a puzzling business and wondered if a person named Mary Gorham could do anything about it. Involuntarily you in turn wondered how she would look if she waked up, if the color flowed delightedly into those pale cheeks and the eyes began to smile. Cousin Jos, by reason of his seniority, was the first to speak. He did so to an accompaniment of ah's and long-drawn, languid intonations which served him in good stead for linking hesitant thoughts.

"Miss Gorham," said he, not unkindly, he hoped, however much of a schemer she might be, "you were here when Mr. John Blakesley made his visit to Madam Blakesley?"

"Oh, yes," said Mary promptly. "I have been here all the time for two years and it was six months ago he came."

"How long did he stay?" inquired Mrs. Frye.

"Only three days. His mother was ill in California and he had to get back to her."

"Now what," said Cousin Jos judicially, putting the tips of his fingers together, "should you say was his purpose in coming?"

Mary's eyes widened in a brief surprise. She thought they knew.

"Why," said she, "Madam Blakesley sent for him."

Immediately all of them with an amazing unanimity, seeming to have rehearsed it beforehand, looked as if they might believe a good many things, but you couldn't expect them to believe that.

"Sent for him?" repeated a skeptical voice from the row of cousins in the background. "I don't believe she even knew he existed. None of us did. He's only a second cousin once removed."

"Oh, yes," said Bridgie, in languid re-

buttal. "I knew about him. He writes things—of sorts."

"It was the book," said Mary, turning on him a clear-eyed glance, "that made her send. She saw it advertised and it recalled him to her—that there was a Cousin John, I mean—and she got it, chiefly on account of the name. I read it to her. And then she sent for him to come on."

"Extraordinary!" murmured Cousin Jos, now putting up his eyeglass to look at her censoriously. "What's the book about?"

Mary's face in the most amazingly lovely way dimpled up into laughter.

"I couldn't tell you," she said. "I've read it over and over, but if you ask me what it's about—why, you'd have to read it."

"What's it called?" came the captious voice from the rear line. "At least you know that."

Mary had ceased laughing; she gave the title quite clearly and softly and as if she loved it.

"*The Girl in the Tree*," she said.

Now there seemed to be a chorus of voices repeating it with a curiously hostile unanimity, in one key, though all the notes jarred: "*The Girl in the Tree!*"

"Oh, I know that," said Bridgie, with his air of being on the spot. "Haven't read it myself, but one of the fellows is going to review it for me."

"Humorous?" inquired Cousin Jos. "George Ade, that sort of thing?"

"Feminism?" suggested Cousin Milicent, in her incisive way.

"Oh, dear, no!" said Bridgie. "It's fanciful, you know, fantastic, if you see what I mean. And not so very original, if you ask me. Derivative, I should call it. You could see what the fellow'd been reading—Walter De la Mare, Forster, Dunsany."

Then Mary astonished them. She colored high, indubitably with anger.

"It isn't either," she said. "Derivative! Derivative yourself! It's one of the most original things ever written, and that's what Madam Blakesley saw in it. And it was so convincing, so—so—oh, I don't know how to say it—but she felt if she could see him he might be able to tell her more, tell her what to do."

"Do?" said Cousin Jos. "What 'd she want to do?"

Mary looked all round the semicircle. She even seemed to seek out the rank and file in the rear and interrogate them with the others: whether indeed it would be possible to enter on this grotesque adventure of teaching a pack of Blakesleys, all running, as the pack does, true to form, how to believe there was a world outside the world they were accustomed to touch and see. She began speaking reflectively, as if resolved to consider their capacities and make no mistake.

"Madam Blakesley," she said, "as you know, had had for many years a restricted life—physically. She had lain in bed seven years, and all her patience, all her determination to forget herself in books and news of the outside world couldn't keep her from thinking of herself as a prisoner. And that book—"

Here she paused, and Cousin Jos, seeing it all perfectly now, was relieved to find he could help her out.

"Oh! ah!" he said. "Some sort of cure in it, what? Osteopathy? Chiropractic? Made her think something could be done."

Hope faded from Mary's face. She had thought something could be done with the receptive intelligence of the Blakesleys, but she relinquished that, with a sigh.

"Now what sort of person," said Cousin Harriet, as if she felt all this had been a divagation from the real thoroughfare, and to be escaped from as soon as possible, "what sort of person is this young man?"

Again Mary hesitated. Then she said, in her clear low voice:

"A quite special sort of person."

"Now, now," said Cousin Jos, irritated as he always was at any unexpected combination of words, "what do you mean by that?"

"Well," said Mary, as if she found it impossible to meet a Blakesley on that point, "he's coming, you know. You'll see."

But Mrs. Frye felt these side excursions into the psychology of John Blakesley to be merely futile. Here were they all intrenched in an impregnable position: Cousin Sabrina who, it became every minute more apparent, from Mary's testimony, had been of unsound mind, had left the major part of her property to this Western relative who had, in some fashion to be found out, actually hypnotized her into doing it. He was clever enough to do that. He'd be clever enough to understand the combined power of all the New England Blakesleys when they set out to contest the will, and he'd be glad and thankful, on a New England promise of an actually generous sum, to settle out of court. But Mary evidently felt she could do a little more toward rendering the New England temperament slightly more malleable for John when he should come.

"You see," she hesitated, "Madam Blakesley had been growing more and more distressed as time went on, and his coming seemed to be the one thing that took her out of herself."

"Distressed?" repeated Cousin Jos, with finality. "Unsound mind! I see."

"Not unsound in the least," said Mary hotly. "Distressed, as we should all be if we'd been in bed seven years and knew there wasn't a chance of our standing on our two feet again—tired, sick of the whole business. And when she read his book, why, it was as if somebody opened a door, and when he came he opened the door farther—gave it a kick, pushed it wide."

Her eyes were shining so that Bridgie stared into them in a manner Mrs. Frye found so undesirable that she ejaculated his name in a rebuking undertone. But,—cutting in upon the warning,—"Bridgie!" Mary called in what sounded like a cry of triumph, "He's come!" And she flew into the hall to meet him.

She was not the first. Maggie was there, opening the door to him, Maggie who had gone about her duties for the last week like a dour walking image. Martin was there, and they seemed, in a welter of smiles and delighted grunts, to be dragging John Blakesley in between them. He was laughing at them and with them, but without shaking them off he managed a quick handclasp for Mary, and the utterance of her name.

"Mary!" he said, and the Blakesleys, crowded in the library doorway, heard and wondered, in mental unison, what "Mary" spoken in that way could mean. He was a tall, broad-shouldered fellow with one of the most distinctive faces that ever attracted the casual eye. The features were large and cut to a pattern only attained through ancestral pride, but there was something soft about it as well as something aloof and serious. The softness was by no means weak. If he sometimes glanced past you as if he hesitated to meet your gaze, it was for your sake, not his own. He must have got used to knowing he had the gift of surprising secrecies latent in eyes and playing about lips, and, really not wanting them, knew also that people ought to be protected from giving more than they wished. But he was equal to all ordinary situations. He might have a shifting foothold in the clouds, but he didn't live there, and he got himself shaken hands with by most of the Blakesleys, with entire adequacy, said he'd like only to give himself a brush-up, and joined them as they flocked out to the table.

All the leaves were in the mahogany, and Maggie looked placidity itself for the first time since Martin had been requested to put in the leaves. The Blakesleys are what are known as great eaters. They are persons of stomachic remorses and hot water, bicarbonate persons, and they have an unquenchable passion at night for the entrées that are *revenants* of the noon dinner, so to speak. It takes a good deal

of sheer physical strength to eat as much as the Blakesleys. This John may have known from family hearsay, perhaps only from the evidence of their overnourished physiques. He leaned forward and addressed Mrs. Frye, who occupied the place of responsibility opposite Jos.

"Cousin Harriet," he said, with his charming smile and a voice also so charming that you had to break your own current of thought to listen to it, "might I—" but instead of finishing, he turned to Maggie who, with an expression of beatitude entirely foreign to her these days, had been handing about a soup of deadly complexity and richness. "Maggie," he said, "I wonder if I might—could you give me a couple of eggs on toast?"

"DO YOU WANT TO GET BACK INTO YOUR TREE?"

And Maggie who, as they all knew revered the tradition of silent service, answered richly:

"Sure I will, my dear." And moreover she left the room hotfoot and did not return until she brought the eggs with her.

They got through supper as the serious business it was, and without a mention of wills or undue influence. Then they returned to the library with an air, Mary hysterically translated to herself, of lining up. Again they disposed themselves in close formation and Bridgie, though after Cousin Jos had asked fretfully, "Why will you, my boy?" was the only one to smoke. He stretched his long legs out in a way that annoyed Cousin Milicent exceedingly, because they pointed directly at her, and regarded John with a cool, inquiring, and not patently hostile interrogation. As for John himself, he sat upright in a Chippendale chair which had, as if by volition of its own, got into the center of the arena, his hands upon his knees. Once or twice he turned to Mary, and she answered the look with a similar bright signal of her own, but the glances seemed to concur in saying, "Really, you know, we mustn't look at each other or we shall laugh." John did laugh, suddenly, not with the robust volley his friends were used to, but a queer little chuckle that seemed to imply he had a joke all to himself.

"Now," said he, "behold me, here by

my lonesome in the middle of the room. Something like the prisoner at the bar."

Cousin Jos, having no ear for pleasantry, accepted that as an opening.

"Yes, my dear fellow, yes," said he. "That's precisely how it is. In a sense, you are. Or a witness, rather. Yes, a witness. The fact is, we are all extremely glad to see you here to-day. In fact, we should have sent for you if you hadn't come. No doubt you know the terms of Cousin Sabrina's will."

"Yes," said John, with a quick glance full at him. "She told me all about it."

"Aha!" said Cousin Jos, an aspiration that meant "We're getting somewhere now, and sooner than I thought."

Mrs. Frye drew a long breath, and her excellent corset, valiant under the chiffon, did creak. There were other inarticulate comments from outlying Blakesleys, and Mary, silent, sat mentally tabulating them.

"We understand," said Cousin Jos, accepting now to the full his leadership of the clan, "we understand that you came on here some months ago. You had frequent conversations with Cousin Sabrina. Did she in those conversations refer to her intentions as to her will?"

"Oh, yes," said John promptly, "she told me exactly what she meant to do."

"Did you," pursued Cousin Jos, "ah—advise her?"

John's answering look betrayed no offense. He was a knowing person, and he had learned in this first brief skirmish that you couldn't allow yourself to take offense at a Blakesley. They were like men undertaking blindfold the difficult business of life. They weren't fair game.

"Advise her to leave it to me?" he inquired. "Lord, no!"

"What is your impression," asked Milicent, in her chilliest voice—the one she kept for rebuttal of attacks on the Ideal—"of Cousin Sabrina's reason for selecting you—perfectly unknown to her until recently—for her heir?"

John looked at her thoughtfully. Was it probable, his glance seemed to ask, that he could tell her?

"It does seem queer," he conceded, "but really it isn't. You see—" he spoke directly to Milicent now, and her dark eyes met his as if they challenged him to convince a lady as near to authoritative sources of conduct as she. "You see," he went on impetuously, "Cousin Sabrina—she asked me to call her that, only really she wanted me to leave off the cousin—got an idea I had a secret."

Cousin Jos seemed to prick up his ears. What the devil did it all mean?

"You see," John said again, as a sort of springboard to help him dive to the rescue of these submerged Blakesleys, "Sabrina was very unhappy."

There was a murmur from the circle, of incredulity, of faint amusement, of denial. He read it so.

"Oh, yes, she was," he insisted. "Think of her, bedridden, tied by the leg!" A maidenly Blakesley in the rear rank made a noise in her throat implying that legs might be expected in this age of lipsticks and cigarettes, but they no more belonged to a Blakesley by marriage than to the Queen of Spain. "And beyond that," he continued, searching his mind for what he had gathered about Cousin Sabrina, "she'd always been tied by the leg. A prisoner, that's what she was. Always had been. First, her mother died when she was quite little and left her to take care of her father. No cinch, I tell you. I know, for mother told me. Then, when her father died she married Cousin Amory. And he was a pill."

A combined roar, of small volume, went up from the cousins, exactly as the animals in the Zoo catch an infection of revolt.

"Oh, yes," said John quietly, "he was. Mother told me. Kind of a country deacon, in spite of his money, the sort that doctors the barrel of apples and makes his wife's poor little trousseau last on into her widowhood."

"Well? well?" said Cousin Jos au-

thoritatively. "What's all that got to do with Sabrina's will?"

"I know, I know," said John, drawing his brows together and thinking, as he realized how foolish it was going to sound. "Sabrina was almost crazy, overwrought on the subject of escape."

"Aha!" said Cousin Jos. "Now we're getting somewhere. Unsound mind!"

"Not on your life," said John, looking at him as if, on a repetition of the word, he might deface that parchment countenance. "Sabrina was as sound as a pippin. But she wanted to get away, didn't much care where or how. And she'd got the idea that I should understand. Mary did, and she was no end grateful. And when she heard about me, she thought, 'Why, there's two of them.'"

"I suppose," said Bridgie, eying his cigarette reflectively, as if the secret lay in that, "it was the damn book."

"Yes," said John, in relief, because it looked for a minute as if somebody was offering him a rescuing hand, "as you say, it was the damn book."

He knew, being familiar with books, why Bridgie tagged it with the overworked adjective. There were so many books published from glowing intent, only to die untimely, and here was one that preplexingly was bringing in the writer a fat emolument he had been at small pains to earn. Bridgie's "damn" was hurled disgustedly not so much at the book itself as at Fortune, who is dangerously enamored of her own mad jokes.

"Can't take it in," said Cousin Jos helplessly. "A book!"

A person might be influenced by a book to go as a missionary, he would have implied, to make explorations, to become a theosophist. But escape—what had escape from a comfortable house and a fat income got to do with a book? And especially to the extent of making a will?

"Perhaps, John," said Mary, "you'd better give them some idea of the book."

John frowned, but with perplexity, not in reproof of her.

"I don't know," he said slowly. "Difficult! Makes you feel like a fool, explaining your own stuff. The book itself is no great shakes. However, I'll try. The War," he began slowly, "has brought about new conditions. You know that. Psychology, the general state of mind, has quite changed."

Cousin Milicent seemed to wake here to a surprised interest in him. Her hands trembled upon each other.

"I have never," she said, "known such wholesale interest in the great questions: Organized Religion, Peace."

John gave her a little nod.

"Yes," he said, "but those are side issues compared with the main trend."

"Side issues!" she repeated, and Mrs. Frye echoed her.

"Not unimportant," he conceded, "not at all. But the point that has struck me since 1918 is that, without knowing it, we've really reverted to paganism. There's an earth spirit abroad. Don't you know there is? Don't you see the signs of it? That's why quite nice girls go half naked and paint themselves to look like harlots."

That cousin in the rear rank gave a small staccato shriek like a frightened mouse. Mrs. Frye rose to her feet majestically and ejaculated his name, "John Blakesley!" But Bridgie put out a hand and touched her on her chiffon-clad arm. "There, there, mum," said he, "sit down." Bridgie was curious. He thought the cousin out of the West sounded rather a good sort, and he wanted to hear more.

"No, no," said John, "you don't get me. It isn't any conscious thing we're doing. We hardly know we're changed. It's just one of those mysterious reactions of nature. A lot of men have been killed off. Nature's got to supply the lack. So up comes the earth spirit out of the dark where she's always lying like—like Enceladus, you might say, in a volcano. Something has told her life is thinning out, and up she comes and sets us to dancing and gorging and drinking—Lord, I don't know what she

doesn't do! And she doesn't understand it any more than we do when we obey her. She's just a force, you know—but pagan, pagan. Don't you see?"

They didn't. Mary, loving him the more for his boyish effort, recalled him again.

"The book, John," she said. "Don't get away from the book."

John looked at her again, frowning, and passed his hand across his forehead confusedly, as if he wished to heaven he had the sense to keep in straight roads where Blakesleys could follow him.

"Now," he said, "the book. I called it *The Girl in the Tree.* The girl was a dryad. She'd been touched by the earth spirit, too, and she got out of her tree where she'd been living in the cool for a million years and went wandering. And of course she met a mortal and he fell in love with her, and imprisoned her in his conventions, and she was so unhappy—just like Cousin Sabrina, you know—that she never stopped wanting to get back into her tree. And she might have, you see, only when she'd got out she couldn't tell which tree it was, and when she knocked at the wrong trunks the dryads inside told her to go away."

"Dryads!" muttered Cousin Jos. He saw himself back on his collegiate excursions through classical mythology. "Naiads! Muses! There were nine of them." This numerical fact relating to the Muses seemed to be the only thing he had to cling to, and he kept on repeating it in an undertone: "Nine! nine!"

"Of course," said Mary, still bent on helping out, "of course they didn't know she was a dryad, the mortals. Even her husband didn't."

"No," said John, feeling himself rather a fool, yet following her lead, "and, once she was out of the tree she didn't know it herself. Only she was dreadfully unhappy, you see, and a tree—especially a beech tree—gave her an extraordinary feeling that it was home, and somehow or other she'd got to get inside of it. The book really is about her adventures, back and forth, how she tried to escape and finally how she did. And somehow or other it hit Cousin Sabrina just right, and she felt as if there were a secret for escaping, of running away for good, even if, like her, you were tied by both legs, and she—quite unreasonably, I own—thought she could come at it through me. And after a while, still unreasonably, she got to think other people could and my life ought to be smoothed out so I could help 'em."

"Well," said Cousin Jos, deliberately, as if he challenged them all to deny his right to say it, "I never heard such damned nonsense in my life."

John looked at him assentingly. There was a faint, rueful smile on his face.

"Yes," he said, "I know how you feel. I should feel so myself. But that's really how it was."

Again Mary was ready, this time with her last hopeless gesture.

"I have the book here," she said. "John, I think you'd better read it to them." She took it from the table behind her and held it out to him, and, as he merely looked at it without taking it, added, in a low tone that seemed to hold some persuasive message he would have to recognize, "She'd like to have you."

Upon that he took the book, a square green volume with a tree in gold on the cover, and up in the right-hand corner the outline of a girl's face. It was not a large book, as Cousin Jos noted with relief. He was one of those who "hate to be read to," and he only submitted to this in the hope that it was, though inexplicably, a preliminary to getting through this befogged first issue to the question of wills. John began in a meditative tone as if he wondered as he went along what he might leave out. He didn't want to bore these people, but he had already accepted the attitude of men who love a motherlike

MARY TURNED AND LEFT THEM—SOMEHOW SHE MUST DEFEND THEIR SOLITUDE

woman in feeling that Mary must know best, and acquiescing in it. This was a June night, very still as to wind and outside sounds of any degree. It was a full moon that was going to be fuller, and Mary, from where she sat, could imagine its first glint behind the sycamore, and knew what light it would soon be pouring impartially, yet with inescapable power, over the terraced garden without. She was listening to him as he read, weighing every syllable, and yet her heart was running on before him to a later hour when she knew, without spoken agreement, they would meet down in the grove where he had first kissed her. He read without any of the expedients of the elocutionist, rather monotonously, indeed, and feeling his way along the lines with a kind of interrogation as if he wondered, as much as Cousin Jos possibly could, why a book that seemed to him the most obvious thing to write could incredibly have had an effect on the robust fortunes of the clan. As he read they grew more and more subdued, perhaps not to him but to the stillness without. Only Mrs. Frye's buckram creakings were still evident, in time to her breathing, and once when they became too importunate Bridgie looked at her and frowned. The reading continued until after eleven and the book was not ended. John glanced up and asked:

"Shall I go on?"

"Go ahead," said Cousin Jos peevishly, and John could not tell whether he wanted an incomprehensibly foolish matter over and done with or whether the story of a dryad out of the wide freedom of her tree really meant something to him, and nerves not called on for years had begun to thrill. Had Cousin Jos a tree? And now the book was ended. John shut it with relief and laid it down on the table. For perhaps the first time in any assembly of their united forces, the Blakesleys were silent. Cousin Jos was the first to speak.

"Come," said he, with a roughness

foreign to his customary utterance, "let's go to bed."

And still in silence the Blakesleys rose and filtered off upstairs. John and Mary turned to each other and stood, and when the last footfall had ceased he went to her and took her into his arms.

"Mary! Mary!" he said. "I was scared blue for fear you wouldn't be here."

"Where should I be?" she asked, looking up at him with the moved, adoring glance he remembered.

"I don't know. All I know is, I don't let you get out of my sight again till we're married."

"No," said Mary, "don't. I want to be married, too."

"Come on out," said John. "The moon must be ripping on the sundial. Do you s'pose it tells moon time same as sun time?"

He was beginning to be silly, and that Mary loved. But she would not go out to the sundial. He had been traveling for days, he had read nearly all night, and now he should go straight to bed; and though he protested, she had her way, saying if he wasn't tired she was, and he was going upstairs at once. Finally, on her mock terror at what Cousin Jos would think of their sitting up courting when it was now all hours, he did go, and she set herself to the casual fastening of doors that always seemed enough in the inclosed security of this residential calm. It was besides, she smiled to herself in thinking whimsically, a night when nobody would want to get in. On the contrary, everybody indoors would want to get out. She herself did. It had been a notable triumph of her own common sense, this bantering away from her the one creature in the house to whom, as she believed, magic and moonlight meant the sorcery they did to her. Still hand in hand with this inexorable common sense, she went upstairs slowly, in the measure of her unwillingness, and, broad awake, sat down by her window to muse. Not on the Blakesleys! that would bring discord crashing down upon harmonies, philistia itself striding into paradise. Yet she couldn't quite escape their aura, thinking, in spite of herself, of the amazingness of life which rains such beauty down in a flood that is all but audible and still lets all the Blakesleys sleep. She almost imagined the combined volume of their snores. There she caught herself up. Mary was rapt into the upper spaces that night; she mustn't be vulgar enough for even the imagined realizing of a snore. She might find herself as Blakesleian as the rest of them. She sat there untired. When she thought of that bright vigil afterward, it seemed incredible that it could have been so long. What was she waiting for? The dawn? It wasn't so far away. Suddenly, as if the hourglass turned, her mind turned with it. She was, she told herself, wild as a hawk. Why shouldn't she slip out and do a little wandering of her own? The moon was regnant. She went noiselessly downstairs and out at the door at the back of the great hall which led directly upon the terrace, and stole as softly down the path toward the little river, past the lilac groves and peony beds, to that smooth-swarded oblong at the right which she and Sabrina had called the Fairies' Ballroom; she crossed it and continued into the grove, still at the right, a grove of dense shadows and smooth, clean beech boles. She stood there for a moment, her hand on the trunk of a tree, feeling affectionate toward the tree and the dryad that owned it, but this was only because John had written about beech trees and dryads. And suddenly, as she smiled a little at herself, knowing she was a hard-headed young person to whom dryads were but the inherited phantasms of the poet's brain, her heart stopped a beat. Coming toward her between the beech boles was a figure in floating white, and Mary, terrified, knew she had to challenge it and did, in a hard, high voice that was half laughing and half afraid:

"Do you want to get back into your tree?"

The woman may have been as startled as Mary, but she came directly up to her.

"Oh, I don't know what I want," she said, in a voice as high and strained as Mary's own. "I couldn't stay in the house — the moon — everything. Did you ever see," she continued recklessly, as if Mary were her dearest friend and she made nothing of confiding in her, "anything so horrible as the way Jos Blakesley has changed?"

It was Milicent. She stood quite close to Mary now, and Mary, looking at her in the moonlight, thought she should never have known her. The unbound gray hair on her shoulders—a braid hanging from one side and the rest floating, as if she had begun it for the night and stopped midway—her great dark eyes, her trembling mouth, these made her inconceivably moving and strange. Mary had got back to her normal state of determined calm.

"You know," she said quietly, "I've seen Mr. Joseph Blakesley only within the last year."

"A god!" said Milicent bitterly. "That's what they used to say, a young god! Beautiful—his feet upon the mountains!" And then it seemed to come upon her that she didn't know what she was saying, and she put her hand to her heart in a gesture Mary found poignantly moving, and stood there and panted for breath. But she hadn't done. "We weren't first cousins even, but they said it was wrong for us to marry. We should have told them—" she hesitated here and broke into a phrase amazing from her lips—"to go to the devil, and run—run away. Escaped!"

Mary laid a hand on her arm.

"Somebody's coming," she said, in a warning tone.

It was a tall figure between the trees. Milicent turned and looked. It came rapidly, with long strides, and had not nearly reached them when she cried out piercingly:

"Joe! Joe!"

The figure came faster. It was Cousin Jos, in his shirt and trousers. Had Cousin Jos, Mary wondered, begun to undress and found the moon and the impulsion of dryads and trees too much for him? Had he, too, kept vigil? He went up to Milicent and took both her hands.

"I saw you go by under my window," he said. "Child! child!"

They stood there looking at each other, and Milicent was sobbing, little dry short gasps that must have hurt her horribly, as they hurt Mary to hear. And Mary at that instant knew Milicent, with a woman's wild unreason, felt it possible to go back through the road that had led to this arid corner and have him hers again. Could she do it? Could the man help her?

"You always suffered so, beyond everything," he was saying. "I never could bear it, darling."

At that word Mary turned and left them; she went back to the edge of the Fairies' Ballroom, and looked once over her shoulder. They were still there, but walking to and fro, and so near that she could believe his arm was about Milicent's waist. Now she smelled a cigarette and, with a wild certainty that somehow she must defend their solitude, she ran forward to the figure advancing toward her across the sward. It was Bridgie. He threw away his cigarette and put out his hands to her, exactly, she thought, with a wildness of her own, as Cousin Jos had done to Milicent. Still she went on. She was willing to clutch his hands and hold them if only she could keep him from charging upon that infinitely pathetic pair striving there in the moonlight to build up the dream towers of their ruined lives. She wanted, foolishly, to laugh. Would he have recourse to his pet formula whereby, for a couple of days, he had been trying to establish some sort of amorous signal code with her? Would he call her a peach? And he did.

"Mary," he said—and for a minute Mary almost liked him because he sounded so boyish though hopelessly underdone—"Mary, you're a peach."

She accepted his hands and held them, and he was so overcome by her meeting him halfway that he stood there exclaiming, in a perfect surprise:

"You do like me, don't you? Mary, you do like me?"

"Not the least in the world," said Mary promptly. "I'm going to marry your cousin John. And you've got to get back to the house and go to bed. You're drunk. Everybody's drunk but me—"

"No! no! no!" he insisted, and kept trying to lift her hands to his lips, while she as steadily pulled them down. She clutched at all the synonyms for drunkenness she had ever heard, to convince him.

"You're slued, half-seas over, tight—and it isn't your body. It's your mind. Go back to the house and lock your door and throw the key out of the window and go to bed. I'll find the key in the morning and let you out."

"I don't know what's happened," he kept saying. "It's different, everything's different, everything except you. Mary, you're a peach."

"Don't you see what it is?" asked Mary sharply. "It's that book, *The Girl in the Tree*. The book may not be any great shakes, as John said, but somehow the idea of it in a time of the world like this, waking up the earth spirit and all—escape!"

"That's it," said Bridgie, almost moaning now. "You come with me, Mary. We'll escape."

He was dragging the more heavily at her hands, and she wondered, under the pain of her wrung fingers, whether she ever could get away from him, when he suddenly gave a sharp little bark:

"My God! there's mother!" dropped her hands and raced headlong toward the house.

Mary began laughing hysterically as she stood there shaking the blood into her maltreated fingers, and Mrs. Frye, who had passed Bridgie without a word, came on and addressed her in a voice so moved with some unrecognized emotion that Mary ceased shaking her hands and stared at her. And it seemed a part of this mad night that she should find her in her nightgown, though unlike Milicent, she wore no kimono over it.

"Mary," said Mrs. Frye, "you shall marry him. He is a good boy. His mother tells you so. You shall marry him at once."

"But I can't," said Mary, adding perfunctorily, "I'm going to marry John."

Mrs. Frye did not seem to hear that.

"I don't know what it is," she cried brokenly, as if she were groping without hope after lost treasures, joys she might have had. "But there's something the matter with us. What is it? O Mary, you tell me. You marry Bridgie and perhaps he can be saved."

Mary took her hand and led her to the stone seat by the sundial, and they sat down there and Mrs. Frye talked. Mary never would tell what it was about. She wouldn't even tell John. She said she couldn't. Once he gathered that Mrs. Frye was frank to a point of what all Blakesleys would have called indecency. She was not complaining, not repenting. She was simply bemoaning herself and the way the world was made. And having got the idea that you could escape—somewhere, somewhere—she insisted almost to the verge of hysteria that at least Bridgie should escape, for Mary would help him.

It was in the first dusk of daylight that Mary led her back to the house, the spirit gone out of her, blubbering faintly and longing only for her bed. Mary insists that during that vigil there on the stone bench she saw figures dimly in and out among the trees, other Blakesleys wandering up and down. Making love? She did not know. Repudiating their pasts and wondering if, though so late, they could run away?

She did not know. But having led Mrs. Frye up the staircase to her room, she ran out again into the Fairies' Ballroom to see if she could get back her own composure from the rising sun. A figure was advancing toward her from the grove. It was Milicent, walking like the dawn, her face ecstatic. When she saw Mary she stopped and waited for her. Could that look, Mary wondered, be the seal of her triumphal possession of Cousin Jos? Women are strange things.

"Mary," said she, in a warm voice, hued like the sunrise, "there ought to be a service, a ceremonial. Out of doors. Like this. See. We must face the east."

She turned to the east and the blaring splendor of the almost vocally rejoicing sun. She lifted her arms, and the long sleeves, falling away from them, made the pose a statuesque beauty that should have been caught and kept forever. "Hail!" she called, in a voice so sweetly piercing that Mary trembled before the strange beauty of her. Mary, remembering John in there asleep and what gods he worshiped, lifted her own arms and cried, "Hail, Apollo!" It was antiphonal. Milicent was ready. "Hail, Apollo!" she echoed, and Mary followed, "Hail, O sun!" to hear Milicent, on the last note, "Hail, One God of the sun!" Then Mary, dropping her arms, turned and fled. She dared not look at Milicent again. After emotion, she knew, comes shame, and she would not see that rapture wiped from Milicent's face.

It was solid daylight when Mary came down to find the dining room full of Blakesleys and the odor of toast. Somebody had ordered an early breakfast and Maggie, since it meant their going, had been desperately obliging in her haste. There were portmanteaus at the door and all down the steps. Motors were almost sobbing in their eagerness

HE WHIRLED ABOUT AND ADDRESSED THE BLAKESLEYS

to get away. Only John of them all looked the serenity of the man who has slept through and awakened with an untroubled mind. He was standing by one of the porch pillars with Cousin Jos, and Cousin Jos looked older than Mary had ever seen him, ravaged and ugly. He was beating the nervous fingers of one hand on the pillar and telling John just what he had to expect.

"Once more," said he, "we shall give you a chance to settle out of court. Otherwise—"

John spoke with a quiet steadiness which, as Mary knew, covered a horrid discomfort of his own. He hated to hurt even a rich Blakesley by telling him he couldn't be any richer through him.

"It has already been settled out of court, so to speak. When I was here before, Cousin Sabrina made over the house to me, and the bulk of her property. The will covered only the balance, something inconsiderable—the legacies to you and the servants, and a small remaining sum to which I am residuary legatee. That was really all she died possessed of."

Cousin Jos did not look at him. He glared out into the sunshine where the motors were throbbing, and the skin seemed to tighten and dry all over his yellowing face. Milicent came out and he saw her no more than he did the waiting motors, and she gave no sign of seeing him. He whirled about and addressed the Blakesleys crowding behind him on the upper step and in the hall:

"She has played it on us. Sabrina! Yes, I mean Sabrina. She gave the house and the bulk of the property to him before she died."

Milicent, drawing on her gloves beside the taxi she had ordered, uttered one word. "Why?" she asked in a kind of negligent scorn, not of Jos but of Blakesleys in general.

"I know," said Mary impetuously, from the top of the steps. "She told me. She said it would prevent trouble after her death."

Then Mary was aware of the Blakesleys stepping into motors but chiefly of Cousin Jos and Milicent going away each alone, he fussily tucking the rug closer about his thin, dew-stiffened legs and she sitting haughtily upright as if, now this particular exigency were over, she need never speak to any Blakesley again.

YOUTH ASKS

BY MARGARET WIDDEMER

I WONDER what they know?
They must be very wise,
With all a lifetime's garnering
Behind their dulling eyes;

And yet they talk of tiny things
And petty things long known,
And handle life that burns so hard
As if it were a stone. . . .

Oh what are life and living
And what is great and small?
For I am sick with wisdom,
Who have not lived at all!

YOU CANNOT BUY IT ALL

BY FREDERICK PALMER

IT is not worth your while to read more than half this article if you are not able to be virtuous and happy on less than a hundred thousand a year. For all who cannot, I make at the outset a suggestion which should appeal to them for improving efficiency and reducing waste in overhead emotion.

They know how established rank simplifies matters at official gatherings. The President goes ahead of a governor, who goes ahead of a mayor, who goes ahead of a municipal councilman, while generals and admirals go ahead of colonels and captains. In private gatherings hosts are troubled by the problem of precedence, and at a reception or in the world at large we do not know how much respect to pay to the strangers we meet in these days when the advertisements dress both rich and poor alike in the same stylish brand of collars.

To remove this embarrassment we have only to broaden the application of the custom of Rotary Club meetings where members wear "J. Jones, Hardware," or "S. Smith, Real Estate," on the lapels of their coats. Every citizen would have in his buttonhole a card stating the amount of his wealth and income. If he had no label it might be taken for granted that at least the sum of his fortune was only a few war-trading stamps which he might have to sell to pay his rent the next day. All officially certified millionaires would be divided into classes: one hundred millions or more, first class, and one to five millions, tenth class. All would have the relative rank of peers and the privilege of sitting at the speaker's table.

Occupations would be recognized by the labels. A champion prize fighter who wrote the story of his life and battles for a newspaper syndicate would be in the millionaire-author class; the stage director who had become a producer of popular "movies," in the millionaire-artist class; and the lawyer who had a succession of lucrative receiverships and favorable income-tax decisions, and the surgeon who could "get away" with a charge of five thousand dollars for taking out an appendix would be in the millionaire-professional class.

The label, "Popular novelist, royalties from all sources last year, $100,000," would outrank the one with only $75,000 a year; while the author whose label said, "Just writing on in my way and getting $5,000 a year" could be put in his proper place at once. In the educator class we should have "College Professor, $15,000 a year including private income," and "Just an average Professor, $3,000 a year," down to "Teacher, $1,500." In the medical class we should have "Specialist, $100,000 a year," down through the grades to "Country Doctor, $3,000 a year," and "Medical Scientist, who gave the world a new serum, $5,000 a year." In the law, "Ex-cabinet member, $200,000 a year," down through the grades to "Average Counsellor, $6,000 a year."

All people with large incomes which made them potential millionaires might be knights and baronets, and have a table expectant near the speaker's table. Others of lesser rank would have seatings in their order of precedence, according to their incomes. There would remain the mass of the three-to-ten-thousand-a-year class. They would have tables at the back of the room and overflow out

into the hall and into the yard; and they would have to be content with only soup, roast, vegetables, salad, and dessert in this poverty-stricken country of ours.

There would be many college professors, teachers, inventors, artists, musicians, dreamers, and salaried and small business men to keep the conversation lively in this company. Millionaires would be welcome as guests if they checked their fortunes at the door, so that they would not talk about money as they relaxed from the strain of acting up to their wealth and from the strain of trying to work their way nearer the head of the speaker's table.

Mr. Boom-Boom, as I called him, who after too heavy a breakfast used to explode over his morning's newspaper at the resort hotel where I was last winter, should especially welcome my label system. If he had worn a label I might have learned that he was even richer than I thought he was, and that the "bell hops" were not treating him with proper respect.

I noted that the talk among the groups which gathered on the veranda after dinner was usually of money. So it is wherever you go. Last summer on one of the palatial transatlantic liners I moved from one group to another in the smoking room, listening, and learned that eight out of ten were talking in terms of money.

Lately, I have often recalled the remark of an old Buddhist priest in Japan twenty years ago:

"I don't worry so much about the missionaries Christianizing us as about the money-madness of Western civilization which is engulfing the whole world," he said.

His shaven head and beetle eyes as he sat on the temple steps made him look like a true prophet out of the venerable East. Was he one? Is it through lust of money that our civilization will fall? Its fall has been so often foretold that one sometimes wishes it would tumble at once so that we should no longer suffer the agony of suspense. Incidentally, the priest promptly accepted the five yen which I offered for his temple fund.

"I thought so," I hear from money-worshipers.

In those days, while Russian officials and army officers were peculating and speculating in the Far Eastern boom which concentrated in the "Dalny Bubble," I had luncheon with a group of Japanese officers whose pay was negligible to them in the fellowship of their Samurai dream of the day when they should fight Russia.

When the War came and the world thought that little Japan would be overwhelmed by the wealth and resources of Russia, some of us who knew the combatants merely remarked, "The leans usually win over the fats." When the war was over one of that group of Japanese officers said to me:

"We've won—and lost. We've lost the old days. We shall look back to them, thinking how well off we were. It is the money age. Now Japan will have money."

The Russian fats did not apply the lesson administered to them by the Japanese leans. "We did not know how well off we were," one hears from refugee Russian aristocrats who betrayed their responsibility and lost their heritage by the lust for money and pleasures; and one hears the same phrase from Germans who have seen their savings in gold marks disappear into the inflated currency of the Stinnes dynasty.

Trying to realize how well off you are is to look at matters with time's perspective. It is a consummation in kind with the question, "Would you be young again?" and the answer, "Yes, if I could have youth plus experience." We cannot renew our bodies, but we can keep our minds open, and if we do we may realize how well off we are. Certainly Boom-Boom did not realize how well off he was. He was conspicuously one of the fats.

"All this noise," he exploded about the senatorial investigation, "was be-

cause somebody made some money, and that made people sore who were not in on the deal. Isn't that what everybody is after—money?"

If we are all like him—wanting to make money any way we can—we shall not wait long before seeing the old priest's prophecy fulfilled.

But I took heart that this hotel was in the region which had sent to France the division that won the largest number of Congressional Medals of Honor, and that, in general, the holders of the Medal and the Distinguished Service Cross—who do not boast about this possession as much as some people boast about their palatial suites and ten-thousand-dollar cars—will be entitled by their moderate incomes to sit at our overflow table. Some of them have had as interesting adventures as normally occur on the Stock Exchange.

Boom-Boom had a wife, and I am sure that this marriage was made in a safe-deposit box—if not in heaven. Her modiste, hairdresser, and manicurist assured her appearance at dinner in a gorgeous variety of panoplies. She had a good memory—for the cost of her gowns.

One evening some of the young people of the region came to dance at the hotel.

"How tacky those girls dress," said Mrs. Boom-Boom in a voice which sounded like the rubbing together of pieces of sandpaper. "They sure didn't get their gowns on the Avenue. All together, they wouldn't cost the price of one decent one."

"I hadn't noticed their gowns," I said, "they have such grace, such life, their voices are so pleasant, and they are altogether so charming."

Inside her head, or her purse, Mrs. Boom-Boom realized that there was something she lacked. It was something other than youth, that you cannot buy at modistes' or have applied at beauty shops—something which those young girls possessed.

It was not altogether dissatisfying to observe that, despite Boom-Boom's money and his wife's gowns, they were left rather to themselves by the guests except by a few who were helplessly of their own kind and they were petulantly bored. Something else which you cannot buy is escape from boredom. And boredom is almost worse than being shot at. Who among us who have suffered at the speaker's table does not think so? And those girls were not bored, and their partners were not bored, and I have seen many girls and partners of the fats bored. Falling civilization? Not while youngsters of the leans can be charming in such tacky gowns!

Northward bound, with those youngsters fresh in mind, I was the more sensitive to the hardness of the faces on the luxurious "Special" where fats abounded. In the observation car I sat beside a man who told me, on a car acquaintance, all about how he had made his money. Some of his methods seemed to me too hackneyed to be interesting and too rough to be decent. Had I, too, been a fat we should have had a very good time together until each had heard the other's story of dollar-conquest and faced the prospect of having to listen to it again; for always I have found—and I have a sense that the fats themselves find—that they lack variety of conversational resources.

"What do you think of the MacDonald Government in England?" I asked him when I foresaw that he was about to make the circuit of the track again.

"Rotten! Bolshevist!" he exclaimed.

"I think that it is too conservative," I replied, successfully depending, as a means of escape, upon the fats' lack of a sense of humor—which again is something that money cannot buy. When my label system is enacted into law I am going to add to my own label, "I never talk about money except in the shop." Perhaps in common with those of the same attitude of mind, I may share a table out in the garage, although we should have to exclude soup from our menu.

In my portfolio at that time I had a

letter from the wife of a veteran who was in the mountains, still hoping to recover from tuberculosis which he had contracted in the War. This pair and their child, who had been born during the War, were doing it on ninety-five dollars a month. Her highly intelligent letter had a fine quality of faith, of self-reliance, and pride in her husband—which again is something that money cannot buy.

Opposite me in the observation car of "The Special" was a woman who wore on her person a fortune in jewels, a glaring example of the feminine fats. Her complexion was laid on steel, in keeping with the imitation-mahogany graining on the walls of the car, and her voice sounded like the clink of coin saying, "It's three karats, my dear." Although she was respectable I should feel like apologizing for introducing her to a group of friends in which possibly the only jewels to be seen would be set in modest engagement rings. I think that you might feel the same way.

Then there entered the car a woman who did not wear her diamonds in the morning. I had an idea that if my label system were applied she would be published as in the millionaire class. She was not obliged—as the other woman was—to do it all with money. When she spoke to the porter he served with a sense of recognition of her charm, poise, and considerateness for others which was not regulated altogether by the amount of her tip. The something which she had—the something which money cannot buy—was the same thing which the young people at the dance possessed. It was breeding, which may flourish in a house without a servant and be absent in a house with twenty servants.

Out of the car windows, while Mrs. Diamonds-in-the-morning was talking of how much she had spent at Palm Beach and how much she was going to spend in Europe this summer, one saw farmers at their plowing and small villages and humble cottages, which made a contrast with the life that she led as sharp as that which exists in any Christian land.

Again I took heart. From those cabins youth would come again in time of war to protect the fats as well as the leans with the wall of their lean bodies against an enemy's fire. From such a home came Abraham Lincoln, who would certainly prefer to sit with us at our moderate-income table. So would Benjamin Franklin and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Molière and Shakespeare, Mozart and Beethoven, Michael Angelo and Rembrandt, Homer and Horace, Voltaire and Victor Hugo, Charles Lamb and Mark Twain. If other eminent and interesting ones of the past were to return, what a gathering of good fellows and witty women we should have while Croesus, who, I imagine, was not entertaining, would sit at the speaker's table! The more I think of it the more I like the label system.

Anon on that journey the dome of the National Capitol, under which the leans and the fats are always contending, appeared on the skyline. I did not stop over at Washington. I had already been there in the heat of the early revelations. Not there must we seek the cure. Washington registers only symptoms. The real answer to that old, recurring question of "What is the matter with us, anyhow?" has been partly reflected in the types of human beings whom we have just met in this human world, and in the conditions of the last six years, which are comparable, in our history, only with those of the sordid "carpet-bagging" era after the Civil War.

We who were supposed to be the largest winners in the War may find ourselves the heaviest losers if the fats continue to have their way—which they will not. The War had made us fatter, given us more money than any nation in all history. Should not our elders then have paused, as they realized how well off we were, to consider the danger of adipose and how to keep lean and strong in order to get the most possible for the future out of our treasure-trove?

No, we must have more and more of the source of our power, which was money. More and more money! We would sell unprecedented quantities of goods to a world that must first earn the wherewithal for payment; we would take the shipping of the world from lean competitors who must work cheap.

After thinking in terms of the whole, we had the sharp reaction of thinking only of our individual fortunes. Reparation, public and private, was the first need, and money was the token of reparation in a debt-burdened world. The way to keep step with the procession was to increase one's income. Social groups based upon occupations, education, wealth, intellect, tastes, inheritance, and pastimes—which had been broken down by the common effort of war—were reformed upon a money rating.

In quarters that hitherto had been captious in such matters there was less inclination to question the origin of a bank account, even though it had come from bootlegging. Those who chose might again wear their diamonds in the morning. All to whom the money standard had been supreme were enjoying the sun again after the eclipse. One result was that public extravagance accompanied private extravagance, which is a poor way to make reparations.

The spy hunters, war profiteers, slackers, professional organizers, and dilettante propagandists whom the War had left idle but not voiceless, shouted to the soldiers: "Get to work! Get to work!" as if the soldiers were not used to work and had been some kind of holiday. Never have returning victors been received with such misunderstanding of their services and what service had bred in their hearts.

Was it surprising that the soldiers, as they compared their pay with that received by the non-drafted munition workers at home, should then have adapted their views to the fashion and asked for an adjustment of compensation? Compared to Boom-Boom they were sad amateurs who had been "caught" in the draft or had made the mistake of volunteering.

"But you can always get them to go to war when you need them," as I heard one of our "supermen" say.

Had the soldiers followed the medieval methods which some money-worshipers practice, they would have said, "We have the arms, we are lean, and we'll take for ourselves all the wealth which we did more than you to safeguard." On the contrary, they were the bulwark against that so-called bolshevism of which the Boom-Booms are the chief promoters.

Then, one day, we awoke to realize that we were all messy in our fat, which had the smell of oil. The revelation was the more unpleasant as our officers and soldiers and officials had been clean in the War and we had had sound reason for our conviction that since the Star Route scandals both our business and governmental ethics had improved.

The lean of us—which is the majority of us—felt shame, just plain shame; and the healthy and happy thing was that the truth did come out and we did feel shame. The strict money-worshipers were irritated by the bad manners which let such little club secrets out of the bag. Not of this class were men in public office and men of position who, in their own shame, were obviously thinking, "Why did I even associate with people like that? Was I tempted in that way? Had I become such a money-mucker?" —which at least is the sobering resurgence of a sense of decency that leads the toper to take the pledge.

The lean of us as a people cried, "This must stop!" How make it stop? Only through individualism again acting in service for the whole in peace as we acted for the whole during the War.

In war the danger stands in arms before us, holding our alarm to concentration by the decision of a battle. In peace the danger to the fat nation is insidious. The addict takes more opium to rid himself of the effects of opium.

"What the university wants is to get the coin!" I heard one of a group of alumni saying after my return to New York.

True, the university must have funds and endowments. The philosopher asks how the university is to use them. To make college and university presidents mendicants for more luxurious equipment or to make them better educators? To graduate more fats or more leans? To graduate more men and women who have the qualities which money cannot buy and who know how to use money, or more who will make money supreme? To inculcate standards which lead to fatty degeneration or standards which count for strength, character, and culture? And you may be a gaunt athlete and yet be a fat. Golf or tennis or boxing is no cure for the adipose I have in mind, the adipose which settles round the heart of a people's culture and a nation's strength.

To anyone who says, "You are calling Americans dollar-chasers again," the answer is obvious. Americans are the most generous of peoples with their money. We give largess, from tips to endowments, without stint. This, however, may be only an exhibition of money as power, a further confirmation of our weakness for the money-standard. Seeking money as a means to comfort and for better education is one thing. Quite another is seeking money for display and as a proof that we are keeping the pace, when many of us honestly get more enjoyment and satisfaction when we measure by other standards—standards which champion both thrift and prosperity.

Thrift means individual independence to lead your own life; to care for those dependent upon you; to hold the freedom of your views; to contribute your share of service and to preserve the fine quality of your self-respect, your *amour propre*, in your relations with your fellow men. Never more applicable than now was that old maxim, "Money is a good servant but a bad master."

Why should the richest of people let it be their master? Prosperity, prosperity for the whole—which is the truest prosperity for the individual—goes with thrift; and one honors and respects the leaders and organizers of industry when they keep the faith of the lean, if one is not merely a phrase-maker whose barking at the heels of giants may make the giants turn to cynical materialism.

Money-worship is confined to no one class. Money-worshipers of moderate incomes of which they fail to make the most only contribute to a firmer adherence to the money-standard among those who have large incomes. The public may have a part in the education of the twenty thousand new millionaires—War and post-war—and especially in educating their children to standards which they will find makes life a thing to enjoy fruitfully and wisely and not a thing that is tiresome, hard, and sordid.

Recently I was talking on this subject with a man of great wealth who gives bounteously to good causes and in a sense of understanding that comes only from the high sense of service. He complained against the money-standard warping the minds of other men of financial and commercial power with whom he had to deal. I found him in agreement that more unity on the part of the leans, who think that money really cannot buy it all, toward those who think that it can, would help him as well as the rest of us, in our everyday life and in our social groups, to hold to those principles of conduct which supply the best preventive medicine against present day ills.

Having in mind external and internal upheavals which have happened, with little or no warning, to several nations in the last quarter century of this speedy age, my own contribution to the subject is thriftily concerned with preserving the value of pieces of paper upon which I depend to relieve me from standing in line before a public soup kitchen in my old age. However, if a cataclysm does come—well, I prefer to face it as a lean.

THE WEATHER BREEDER

BY MERRILL DENISON

THE farm lay at the eastern end of the bay, a straggling clearing of fairly level land which seemed to be eternally battling for its life with the second growth of poplars and birches that hemmed it in. But it was a good farm; over sixty acres of stiff blue clay such as is found deposited in pockets among the glacier-scoured granite hills and round the mouths of creeks. It had been cleared of pine stumps of the original forest, left by the lumbermen, by the same pioneer who had built the log house and barns, the stable and the neat workshop. He must have been a good workman, that early pioneer; the adz-work on the two-foot logs showed it, but he had eight children and when his wife died, officials came up from Toronto and took the children because he would not send them to school. The schoolhouse was twelve miles away and on the other side of the lake.

He sold out to old John, and left. Old John never lived there, choosing to remain nearer the village on his own farm, a sorry thing which straddled a glacial moraine that every spring spewed a new crop of bowlders on the scrawny fields. But he abandoned them, except for garden stuff and as pasturage for a few sheep, and used the lake farm in Settler's Bay to grow his grain and hay.

In spring it was mosquito-infested lowland; in summer something like a gigantic fireless cooker with its surrounding hills of rock, burnt bare by succeeding fires. The stiff clay was hard to work. It meant steady, unremitting toil that could not even be commenced until the eight-mile row up the lake had been accomplished. He cleared out an old shanty trail across the big rock—for there was no road on that side of the lake—led his horses up the back way, plowed the land and harrowed it, sowed the seed. Old John never complained; he never thought his life monotonous. It was all part of the yearly fight to grow enough food to carry him and his daughter, Lize, through the winter until the fight could commence again. Year after year the same, and he was sixty, and dry and hard.

The third year he bought a second-hand threshing outfit, and one of the summer campers who owned a launch towed it across the lake for him on a raft that he and Jim, his prospective son-in-law, made out of huge driftwood cedars. The outfit was of great assistance. It saved so much time, and he was able to get his grain down to the foot of the lake before the freeze-up.

Old John knew little about machinery and he was obstinate and opinionated, as old backwoods farmers who have waged a drawn battle with Nature all their lives are apt to be. He was also the least bit hard of hearing. These traits combined to do him injury. Standing on the mow frame, bundling great armfuls of dusty straw behind him, the old man paid no attention to the boy's warning, shouted to him above the clacking noise of the thresher. The frame gave way, he slipped and fell, wrenching one knee so badly that Jim had to help him to the house. There he remained for three weeks while one after another the perfect days of late September slipped by, the boys went on threshing and, after it was finished, carrying bags of grain down to the water's edge, and Lize cared for his leg and souring mood as best she could.

It was the first time old John had ever been forced to remain indoors. He roamed between the kitchen, where he had two chairs arranged in front of the window, and his bed in the back room—restless and grouchy. He left his pipe in one place and growled because he could not find it somewhere else. He got in Lize's way when she was cooking and when she was clearing dishes. He complained bitterly about everything: about himself, about the boys, about the weather.

Particularly about the weather.

Never had there been such a fall in Ontario. An unvarying succession of mellow, cloudless days with a soft haze purpling the hills, even at noontime, and adding a greater richness to the autumn coloring of the hardwoods. Perfect autumn days when sunlight lay like a caress on hills and lake, and trees seemed conscious of their flaming beauty.

EACH MORNING THE OLD MAN HOBBLED TO HIS WINDOW

Days for pagan prayers; and each morning the old man hobbled to his window, looked out, and growled:

"Grh! Another of them damn weather breeders."

No longer could he trust the weather: too often had his hopes, his very sustenance been wiped out in a few hours. A lifelong struggle with the soil had taught him. Late frosts in spring and early frosts in autumn; grain burnt with drought one year and the kernels of the grain scalded by sodden fields the next; a field of oats, golden ripe for the reaping, pounded flat by hailstorms.

To him the weather was a personality, vague and formless, but filled with trickery and deceit and low cunning which sent such days as these. A personality with which he was engaged in a lifelong duel of wits. A duel he could never win, he realized; the best he hoped for was a draw. A decent enough old fellow, rugged and patient, hard working and honest, he lived in a state of epic pessimism in good weather. Bad weather he did not mind: it could not get worse. Good weather he hated: it could not get better.

Lize did her best to cheer him; the boys joked with him, tried to hearten him with gossip about the work, their progress and the success of the crop. They bantered him about his gloomy weather prophecies, and every day he grew more sour. Each morning he foretold calamity; each evening a serene and placid sunset mocked him. The boys scoffed at him, and later scorned his miserable forebodings. It made him bitter and it hurt his pride to have his wisdom jeered at by youth. He would not go outside the house but stayed inside and brooded.

At first Lize did not mind him. She was twenty, a dutiful daughter, fair, with an elusive beauty that might last two babies, certainly not three. She was

OLD JOHN USED THE LAKE FARM TO GROW HIS GRAIN AND HAY

happy and she had her work to do. When she was drying dishes she could look out of the window across the sunlit field of oat stubble and see Jim, her lover, stout hearted and strong limbed, carrying bags of grain on his back from the barn to the water's edge. The drying waited while she watched his sturdy figure until it was hidden from her by a shoulder of rock down near the beach. And she would turn to her dishes with a slow, happy smile. They would be married before winter; with such a crop Jim's share would give them enough to start. Unlike most backwoods lovers, they had waited a long time for each other and had not mated as the wilder animals do with the spring. Young Levi passed, too, sweating under his heavy load. Each time she was glad to see him; every bag he carried added to the slowly mounting total she carried in her mind and heart. But she did not pause in her work as she did when Jim passed.

However, even Lize's even temper had its limits. With the growing of the pile of bags down on the beach, old John's perpetual grumblings grew worse, until the boys lost patience with him and Lize, long-suffering and tender-hearted Lize, grew troubled. She did not rebel or answer with the caustic wit of backwoods women—she crept within herself. When Jim, proud and happy in his work, stole a moment, so that he could talk to her, to come to the pail of drinking water standing on a bench inside the door, she was quiet. When he tried to catch her

she put the table between them and glanced nervously over her shoulder at the door of her father's room. Jim could not understand it; he would go back to his work, hurt and disappointed.

At last the end was in sight. Early one morning Levi took the boat and rowed across the lake to the summer camper's and asked him to come that afternoon with his launch and tow the big flat-bottomed punt behind it. He returned at nine o'clock and all day the boys worked feverishly in the hot sunshine, each one trying to outdo the other, carrying the hundred-pound bags from the barn, through the yard, along the path by the edge of the field, and down to the water. It was a lazy day, humid and breathless. The smoke from the Mallory Lake fires hung low above the hills to the north, and the lake lay still under the heat.

Dripping with sweat the boys worked on, stopping impatiently when Lize called them for dinner, gulping down their food and hurrying back to work again. At four they looked out on the lake for the camper with his launch, the two of them standing on their bags of grain like children playing "I'm the king of the castle." The last bag was there under their feet. Another year's battle ended in victory; the moon was full that night and before morning their grain would be at the foot of the lake and sold, perhaps, by noon. Jim spoke:

"You watch for Murl, Levi. I'm goin' up to the house to tell Lize we're through."

He found her wiping the table when he gently opened the door. Her back was to him and he stole quietly up behind her and kissed her neck where the fair hair curled away from it. She was startled, and pushed him from her with nervous haste.

"No, Jim. No!" she pleaded. "Paw'll hear you'n be out here raisin' ructions. Please, Jim, go on away. He's gettin' sourer'n sourer."

She looked anxiously toward the door of her father's room, and then at the flushed, disappointed face of the boy before her, hurt because she had no praise to give him.

"It seems like you didn't want me hangin' round—to my way o' thinkin'," he complained.

"Jim!"

"And it ain't as if you hadn't promised, neither," he continued hotly, too grieved to notice her concern. "If I hadn't been goin' with you sincet we was young ones."

"Please, Jim," she interrupted, placing her hand soothingly on his moist arm. "Don't talk so loud. He'll hear you and there ain't no sense gettin' him out here when he'll stay in there, quiet. And he ain't been talkin' kindly about us gettin' married this fall." The look in his blue eyes made her slip her hand to his shoulder. "Please, Jim, don't look at me like that, please. It ain't my fault, but we can't go agin his wishes. You said so yourself."

He suffered her hand unwelcomely, it seemed, and spoke in a hot whisper:

"It ain't my fault. I guess I done my share this summer 'n last spring. I got half shares in them oats 'n I'm goin' to tell him so. I'm goin' to see your paw and I'll say to him, I'll say, 'Lookut, you ain't the only one round here that's gettin' sour.' He ain't done no work; he ain't done nothin' but set 'n growl. I'm gettin' 'bout sick o' this sort o' thing. I ain't goin' to stand it. I'll say to him . . ."

She wanted to comfort him, but he turned angrily from her and strode toward the door, opening it quickly. Levi was standing outside. He was on his way from the beach and had paused, puzzled by the look of the sky toward the east. It seemed heavier and darker there, but then the lower reaches of the sky are deceptive on hazy days. A dull pewter sheen comes over them and makes it difficult to know for sure if clouds or dust-screened blue are there. When he heard the door open behind him, Levi decided it was smoke, and turned.

"Murl's comin' round the end of Chris's Point," he said, stepping past Jim into the house. Jim followed him to hear the news. "He's towin' the punt and two rowboats. We can take fifty bags at a lick. Get her down in four trips easy."

They made their plans while Lize pleaded with them to go. They were on the point of leaving when the old man opened the door of his room and stood there looking at them, a picture of abysmal gloom. His gray hair, usually a picturesque, chrysanthemum-like mass, was pulled far down on his forehead, accentuating the scowl that was always there and giving him an expression of comic sorrow. He stood bent forward, leaning on a short cane, his ragged vest falling vertically from his shoulders and his braces festooned dejectedly about his knees.

Lize turned guiltily to her work; the boys shifted awkwardly under his steady gaze. The old man growled to himself and hobbled toward his chair, on which the afternoon sunlight was falling. He jerked it away, as if somehow the chair had betrayed him and gone over to the enemy.

"Sure is a slick day, Mr. Hawley," Levi stammered, as one will try to say anything to break a strained silence.

The old man snarled and slumped farther into his chair.

"You're fools, the pack of you. Don't you know nothin'?"

"I know we got the grain down," Jim exclaimed, a hint of triumph in his voice. "It's waitin' on the beach, and Murl's headin' up the bay now with his launch."

"It'll all be spoilt," old John predicted with assurance. The boys laughed with an easy confidence that infuriated the old man. "Damn crazy notion, draggin' a couple o' tons o' grain round the big lake with the squalls that's always comin' up."

Levi added to his rage:

"Why, there ain't been a wind for a month, Mr. Hawley."

"Ain't that what I been tellin' you all along? Jest one day like this after another," he said.

"Aw, what do you want?" Jim interrupted, disgustedly. "Want the sun to shine all night? There ain't been a day sincet we come up here we had to knock off work."

"They's weather breeders, I tell you," the old man shouted. "Jest one damn weather breeder after another. The trouble with youse is you don't know

HE SUFFERED HER HAND UNWELCOMELY

nothin'. We ought to had a storm when the moon turned." He sneered at them with the malignant pity of old age. "You think it's all right not to have a storm with the moon, don't youse? There ain't been an equalnoxial this year. Do you know what that means?"

He spoke as one who tells of Armageddon—next week. Jim snickered:

"Kinda lucky we missed her for oncet, eh?"

"Missed her?" the old man roared. "We ain't missed her. Lookut there," waving his cane toward the window flooded with sunlight, "she's savin' herself up, that's what she's doin'. Same haze on the hills, not a breath of air movin', jest crouchin' there, simmerin', and waitin'."

He rambled on, an inspired wrathy prophet of nature's malevolence, filling the small room with his predictions of horrible disaster until Lize felt as if the low-beamed ceiling were becoming lower and the log walls crowding in. In desperation she went into the other room and Levi, wearied, edged toward the door and slipped outside. Jim watched the old man, slouched down in his chair, his stubby beard sunk upon his chest and his brooding eyes staring into the oven of the fireless stove as if therein lay winter and a hope of better things. Jim, for all his anger, could not help feeling a contemptuous pity for him, aged and discredited.

But he wanted to speak to him, to have it out with him about Lize. Nothing had ever stood between them but lack of money—his was the poorest family in the Mishinog—and that was over now. The grain, his shares, would start them. He smiled as old John peered hopefully out of the window, searched the distant sky and then settled back into his chair again with the old disappointment stealing over his face.

"Ain't nothin'," he muttered to himself. "Thought I seen a cloud there to the north but it ain't nothin' but them damn fires. If it wasn't for them weather breeders they'd been out long ago."

Jim came, quite abruptly, to the end of his patience.

"Aw, you're actin' like a cow with sore tits in fly time," he broke out, the accumulation of real and imagined wrongs goading him on to dangerous insult. "Youse old lads always figger you can tell about the weather, and by gawd, I ain't never seen one o' youse ever get it right yet. Not oncet. Last fall when we butchered that there pig and you looks at the milt, you was awful wise 'cause it was poor. You says it was goin' to be an open winter without snow. It was the worst we seen in years. Thirty-five below down at the store, snow to your waist. You says so yourself when it was over."

The old man rose to his feet, quivering with a mighty rage, too wrought up to speak. He pointed his cane, palsied with his righteous indignation, toward the door. Jim had committed treason, foul treason. Jim did not move; he stood his ground defiantly, but feared that he had gone too far, perhaps.

"Well? What're you hangin' round for?" the old man quavered when he found his voice.

"I was goin' to ast you somethin'."

"About Lize, I s'pose," John spat scornfully. "Comin' round whinin' 'bout marryin' when you ain't got a cent in the world but shares in that grain down there on the beach waitin' to be spoiled. By gawd, you ain't goin' to come round here throwin' no milt outen a half-starved hog up in my face and expect me to give you a thank's offerin' o' Lize."

Having avenged the insult of the pig's milt—the most respected form of divination in the backwoods—by forbidding the boy the thing that lay nearest his heart, the old man felt a little better, and a little ashamed. That was why he jerked the chair round and banged it into a new position and sat down with his back to Jim, childishly, as if in that way he defied the boy to argue with him

"IT'LL ALL BE SPOILT," OLD JOHN PREDICTED WITH ASSURANCE

or question his decision. Besides, he did not care to meet the boy's eyes.

Jim looked at him and knew that it was useless to say anything. The old man would feel differently when the grain was sold and he could be up and round again. Jim felt sure of that. He opened the door, which faced due west, and the sight of the peaceful fields and the blue lake beyond them restored something of his natural gayety. On the beach, Levi and Murl were standing beside the bow of the launch, looking anxiously toward the house. Jim closed the door and walked toward them.

The old man stared at the stove with unfocused eyes, his hands folded across his belly, long legs stretched in front of him. From time to time he drew slowly on his pipe and the smoke escaped from his lips with a tiny pop. Lize returned to her work with a suspicious redness about her eyes, which she wiped from time to time with her knuckles. The house was still except for the old man's heavy breathing, the frustrated hum of a bluebottle fly at the window, and the rustle of Lize at her work.

A low rumble like distant thunder broke the stillness. John raised his head and listened. The sound came again, far off and low. He shifted his chair and looked toward the half-open door through which a bar of golden light illumined one corner of the dim interior.

"Lize, what's that noise?"

"It must be Murl draggin' the boats up, paw."

He accepted the answer and lapsed into his morose silence.

On the beach three young men stood close together and looked toward the east.

"What do you make of it, Jim?"

"Don't look like smoke. Lookut there, Levi. Just beyond that swale. Lookut them birches."

"See that there swirl of sand by the fence corner. There!"

"Look! There's another!"

"My gawd, look over there above the knoll. Beyond the Dyer Lake hardwoods."

"Look! There's another."

"Funny, there doesn't seem to be a breath of wind. It's curiously still, isn't it?"

"But they's whitecaps out beyond Chris's Point."

"Jim, she's a comin'!"—in awed tones from Levi.

"Ain't nothin'"—with forced assurance from Jim. "You're gettin' as bad as the old lad."

"Looks pretty black to me, boys," from Murl, a slight dark lad with the city stamped on his khaki slacks and his white shirt. "Coming up to the house?"

"Think I'll stay here and watch it a bit."

Murl left them there, two motionless figures which cast long purple shadows across the sand, pink in the late sunlight. A great fright was growing in their hearts, but each of them was afraid to admit to the other the meaning of the thing they were seeing in the east.

Murl spoke to Lize, who was standing in the doorframe.

"Been a wonderful fall, hasn't it, Lize?"

"Yes, ain't it," Lize answered, and moved to let him pass.

Old John moved restlessly and scowled toward the door. They were good friends, had helped each other in small ways, exchanged views and gossip—a front-gate kind of friendship with definite conventions of civility. But old John had sunk into a condition which defied convention; he offered no other greeting than a grunt. Surprised, the younger man seated himself, talked pleasantly of local happenings, blundering on the things the old man wanted least to hear: the weather, its unusual beauty, the success of his season's work.

Outside, the sky was darkening with that prodigious rapidity which accompanies long-delayed storms that seem to be making up time with the remorseless haste of overdue express trains. Inside the house the same dull fly beat against the small-paned windows, through which the long rays of the sun poured in on the grimy papered walls.

The low rumble came again, nearer and more ominous.

"What's that?" exclaimed Murl, anxiously.

"Figgered it was you druggin' your boats up," John answered indifferently.

"It's thunder, Mr. Hawley."

The old man slowly took the pipe out of his mouth and turned to look doubtfully at the younger man. He was not sure he could believe him, and when he saw behind him the open door, he knew he could not. He waved his pipe toward it disdainfully.

"Thunder? You're daft as the rest o' these here young ones. Look at that sun." He slunk back into his chair. Murl was beginning to be nettled by the old man's persistent rudeness.

"It'd looked pretty threatening toward the east when I came in," he said.

"Smoke!"

"No, it wasn't smoke, either. It looked to me like a mighty bad storm."

"A bad storm, d'ye say?" old John asked querulously.

Murl solemnly nodded his head. Old John raised himself slowly to his feet and hobbled into his own room, where there was a window which looked out toward the east. He went to it and leaned his hands on the low sill. To the east and south the birch trees shone with an unreal whiteness against the black sky as if they had been picked out with white paint. The storm was approaching with incredible speed and yet there was no wind. Old John watched silently for a long while, enjoying the scene with morbid satisfaction. He thought of the grain down on the beach and of its inevitable ruin. It did not bother him. He spoke softly to himself with reverential rapture:

"By gawd, she's goin' to be a hell-bender. But I knowed she'd come. I knowed it."

At the front door Lize stood horror-stricken with the first premonition of the impending disaster that would keep her

THE SKY WAS DARKENING WITH PRODIGIOUS RAPIDITY

starved for Jim another winter. On the beach the two boys looked at each other and then at their pile of grain, brought there with such an expenditure of happy, ill-considered labor. They shook their heads, it seemed so trivial now, and moved listlessly toward the house. Murl, understanding something of the loss impending, walked toward them to give what sympathy he could.

And then the wind came. A whining blast that bent the aspens before it and whipped the lake into a fury of small waves. A dead poplar crashed beyond the creek and at the edges of the field the bushes leaned far westward. A swirl of dust spun down the road, broke, and was flung toward the lake. A woodchuck scurried across the corner of the field.

Lize closed the door with difficulty and stood with her back against it.

"Paw," she cried. "It's goin' to be an awful storm. Somethin' terrible. Oh, paw, ain't there nothin' we can do?"

The old man came to the door of his room, a peculiar smile playing across his face for one who has just watched ruination sweep toward him.

"Nothin' but sit here and enjoy her," he answered.

She ran to him and caught his shoulders with her frightened, clutching fingers.

"But, paw," she pleaded, looking at him with eyes in which sheer terror showed. "All Jim's bags down on the beach. They'll be soaked through."

"They won't be worth a red cent when this rain gets at 'em. Might as well throw 'em in the lake."

He had no sympathy. The girl guessed it, although she did not know why, and she wrung her hands together and stumbled across the room where she looked, through tear-blinded eyes, toward the lake with the wind-tossed road to the sun upon it, a beaten froth of gold.

Overhead, the loose old shingles rattled in the wind. The noise of them and the sounds of the storm outside brought the old man a holy joy. They vindicated him, his age and his experience. The righteous, leaning over the balcony railings in an orthodox Heaven, watching the torments of the damned in Hell beneath them, must have some such splendid feeling. He sat down, content in the vicarious retribution of the approaching storm, and waited for the boys.

They came in after a few minutes, wet with the first gust of rain.

"Shut the door, Levi!" Jim said. "By the livin' twist, she's a goin' to pour."

He looked for Lize, but she was standing in front of the window, very rigid and forbidding, fighting to control her grief. Old John watched the boys slip dejectedly into chairs. He was in the center of the room, but they ignored him and each other. When some one spoke it was as if he talked to himself alone.

"Seems kinda funny it couldn't've kept offen us till we got that grain down," Jim muttered, hopelessly.

"Sorta shoots the whole summer's work to Hell, don't it," Levi said. "Think o' the times we rowed up here this summer buckin' a north wind. This is jest about give me enough o' farmin'. Goin' to get me a job out front in some fact'ry. Listen to her pour. Them old shingles won't stand much."

The wind whipped round the corner of the house and moaned in the spaces between the logs and window frames. A pane of glass insecurely held by lifeless putty, long since dried and cracked, rattled pettishly against the muntins with the semi-personality inanimate things assume when roused to movement by some external force. The kitchen was in partial darkness. The leaden half-light of the storm obscured the corners and made the bowed figures vague hulks radiating gloom. There was a long silence such as comes when words seem futile or inadequate. It was broken by Lize asking in a strained voice, barely under control:

"You won't make a cent outen the summer, will you, Jim?"

He shook his head despondently, and then rose and clumsily took her in his arms. Murl, whose city life made him less of a fatalist than the backwoods people, broke the silence with indignant sympathy. He was profoundly sorry for them, and offered to do what he could to help. . . . He noticed the old man crouched in his chair before the stove.

"It's hard luck, Mr. Hawley," he said. "After all, yours is the greatest loss. I wish I could do something."

"That's right, Murl," Levi added with a generous sympathy that forgot the old man's ceaseless grumblings. "The old lad's hit hardest."

Even Jim murmured something while he tried to comfort Lize. The old man listened and his eyes roved from one to another of the saddened group gathered in the dim shack to lament their misfortune and ponder on the useless villainy of the storm. At last he could restrain himself no longer; the humor of

the situation was too delicious. He burst into a long peal of hearty laughter.

"Ha, ha! Listen to her. Comin' down like the whole Mishinog Lake was turned upside down. By gawd, she's a tunin'."

"Paw, stop that awful laughin'," pleaded Lize.

"You lads look good and mournful now, don't you, eh? And feel kinda mournful too. Didn't I say all them good days was weather breeders? Didn't I tell youse all them fine beautiful days'd breed a storm like this here? Didn't I say we'd missed the equalnoxials and we'd pay for it?" His voice rose in its triumphant insistence. "When you lads've farmed like me, for forty years, you won't be so damn cheerful when you see a spell of good weather."

The boys acted as if they had not heard, but Murl thought the old man insane to laugh at such a time.

"Mr. Hawley, you don't seem to appreciate your own loss. Get hold of yourself. Why, you're going crazy, man."

"Oh, no, I ain't," John assured him cheerfully. "I ain't goin' crazy. It's them that is crazy. I was right all along, wasn't I, youse young ones? Eh, Jim? Didn't I tell you, Jim?"

"Shut up," snapped Jim. "You've made life miserable for everybody in camp for most a month with your damn cheerless prophesyin'. You'd get a day from Heaven, made by all the angels for God Hisself, and you'd get sour and claim it was a weather breeder. You got your storm, damn it. Why can't you keep quiet and enjoy it? You're satisfied." He patted Lize's shoulder. "There, there, Lize, don't take on so. Your paw's havin' a good time, anyways."

Levi edged toward the door.

"I can't stand this," he said to Murl. "Comin' out?"

They went out together and an angry gust of wind blew through the opened door. Jim did his awkward best to comfort the girl, but she seemed inconsolable. The old man, oblivious to anything but his startling vindication at the hands of Nature, returned to the attack.

"I'll wager none of you young lads'll ever try to tell me I don't know what kind of a day it is again."

"Dry up," ordered Jim. "Can't you see Lize is bawling her eyes out? You may think a cloudburst's a fine thing, but you're the only one that does."

The insatiable old villain still lusted to hear a recantation.

"But I was right, Jim? Wasn't I right?"

But Jim, who had suffered greatly in silence, lost his temper at last. He strode toward the old man and tightened his fingers on the bony shoulders, shaking him as one shakes a dusty bag.

"Great Gawd, *Yes*," Jim shouted, with his face close to old John's. "You was right. A million times you was right. If you'll only keep that sour trap of your'n closed, I'll say you was always right."

The old man made no effort to defend himself. He only seemed surprised that anyone should take such violent offence at his natural desire to have his prescience acknowledged.

"Ain't no need to take on so, Jim," the old man placated through his chattering teeth. "Ain't no cause to get mad, Jim. As long as you know I was right, I'm satisfied."

Jim loosed his hold, but Lize, to whom this last remark seemed the crowning mark of inane cruelty, screamed at her father:

"You're satisfied? An' how about us? How can we get married when you says you wouldn't let us until the grain was sold and Jim had a little money? There ain't any grain to sell. How about Jim and me? I'd like to know. We ain't satisfied."

"But that don't matter, Lize," Jim added bitterly. "Your paw's havin' such a good time outen this here storm. You oughta be happy he's cheered up. He'd been Hell to live with all winter if they hadn't come some kinda calamity."

He took her in his arms protectingly, and glared defiantly at John.

"I got a mind to marry you anyways." He tried to see her face, but it was hidden against his own chest. He brushed the soft hair with his lips, and leaned forward to speak closer to her ear. "Will you, Lize?"

She shook her head. He could not tell whether the answer was yes or no. Old John looked on, mystified and somewhat offended. He had only pointed out the correctness of his predictions, that was all. He saw no reason for the children attacking him so viciously. He had done nothing. But he felt uncomfortable and wanted to make things right with them.

"Lize," he said quite humbly. "Don't take on so, Lize. Don't rob your old paw outen the only fun he's got this fall." Lize gave no sign she heard him, and Jim's blue eyes kept their unwavering angry stare on him. He tried again. "Lize, I didn't know you and Jim wanted to get married that bad. There ain't no reason you two shouldn't get married if you want to."

"With the hull summer's crop down there soakin' on the beach with your damn weather breedin'? How can we get married?" Jim snorted.

Old John ran his fingers through his gray hair, apologetically.

"You could live down to the house, I s'pose, Jim. Lize's got to look after one of us and there ain't no reason why she can't look after both."

Lize slowly raised her head and looked at her father, but she could tell he was in earnest by the very shyness of him. She flung herself on him, danced up and down in front of him, pulled his stubby beard to draw his face nearer to her so she could kiss his wrinkled cheek. Her joy was so frank, so natural and so unusual that it made the old man feel a little ashamed that he could be the cause of such emotion. But it filled him with a mighty pride as well. He was a power who could give or withhold happiness at will. And he was an unquestioned authority on the weather, an acknowledged prophet whom no one would ever doubt again.

He took Lize in his arms.

Levi found them thus when he and Murl rushed in the door, tremendously excited.

"Jim! Jim!" he shouted. "It ain't hardly rained a drop. There ain't nothin' wet but the top layer, Jim. The storm's passed south o' here."

He rushed out again, and Lize broke away from her father to go and see the wonder for herself.

The shadow of a great disappointment stole slowly over the old man's face.

"Not rained a drop?" he quavered. "But we heard it, here on the roof."

"Must have been the shingles rattling in the wind," Murl told him over his shoulder. "We were just on the fringe of the storm."

Old John stood in the center of the deserted kitchen, trying to collect his thoughts.

"I don't believe it," he muttered, and slowly turned to seek his chair. On the far wall he saw the faint pattern of the window muntins, wan shadows against feeble sunlight. But while he watched the light strengthened, as the tattered edges of the storm were swept away, through yellow and orange until the wall was stained the deep rich red of the setting sun when he promises a fair day to-morrow.

God, and Freud, might know why the old man chose the strawberries. Perhaps because they were sitting there on the corner of the table. Perhaps because they were the same color as the sun-stained wall. Perhaps because they were the only things he saw.

Whatever the reason, quite suddenly, he caught the tin dish in his two hands and hurled it against the wall.

"Set! you damned old weather breeder, set!" he raved, and obligingly enough the sun slipped behind the western hills, leaving countless trickles of deep rich red dribbling down the wall paper.

'LIJAH

BY EDGAR VALENTINE SMITH

FORTUNE had long since ceased to smile on the last master of Holmacres. Then, suddenly, with the advent of the strangers and the coincident creation of 'Lijah, came, too, the visit of the angels.

The two strangers—being strangers—of course, knew nothing of the evil days that had befallen Judge Holmsted, nor were they particularly interested, since their mission concerned not the fortunes, either good or ill, of others but the betterment of their own. What they knew concerning the Judge and Holmacres—other than the fact that the two were intimately connected with the business which was bringing them to the place—was furnished by the aged negro, who, with his ramshackle surrey and ancient nag, eked out a precarious existence driving occasional transients about the countryside. They had found him at the railway station in Wynnesborough, the county seat, and he had driven them along the five miles of deep-rutted road that stretched from the town to Holmacres. Being old, he was naturally garrulous.

For a long time he had sat fidgeting on the front seat of the vehicle, one ancient ear cocked rearward, listening to the unfamiliar accent of the strangers' speech. Finally, during a lull in their conversation, curiosity overpowered him and he half-faced about.

"'Scuse me, gen'lemens," he observed ingratiatingly, "I don't mean no hahm by astin' it, but—you all is Yankees, ain't you?"

"Northerners—yes," one of them answered smiling. "Why do you ask?"

"Yessuh. I thought so. You jus' don't talk like white folks—I *means* like *us's* white folks, Boss."

The stranger who had answered the query—the younger and less grave-appearing of the two—smiled again. "We'd heard so much of your Southern hospitality that we thought we'd come down and see what it is like."

"Hawspitality? Well, suhs, you is comin' to de place wheah it was invented at—when you comes to see de Judge."

Then the old man—product of a bygone day and still living in the memory of its glories—described the hospitality of Holmacres as it had been and as he still saw it. It was the most fertile plantation in the country, and its owner, Judge Holmsted, by odds the richest man, the most learned lawyer, the noblest gentleman and the most open-handed host who ever breathed. His house was the finest that had ever been built; he set the most sumptuous table in the land; niggers fought for the privilege of working for him, even accepting the humblest tasks merely for the honor of being counted among the Judge's retinue. Judge Holmsted, to sum it up, was real "quality"; not like some of the trash which had sprung up with the last generation.

Thus the strangers were prepared in a measure for the picture which greeted them a few moments later: a grove of broad-topped live oaks, with the house in the near distance, a mansion of cement-walled, slate-roofed dignity, with the huge-columned, two-storied veranda reaching in stately welcome across its entire front. And as they stepped from the conveyance and came up the cape-jasmine-bordered walk, another picture was limned before them: a man well past threescore who had risen from his chair. He had removed his broad-

brimmed hat, baring a mane of iron-gray hair, and now stood, despite the dingy frock coat that he wore, a figure as imposing as one of his own Ionic columns, courteously expectant at the visitors' approach.

The younger stranger introduced his companion and himself. They were from the North, as he had explained to the ancient driver, and their business was that of timberland investors. One of their agents had sent reports of hardwood acreage adjacent to the Tombigbee, and they were making a personal trip of inspection. They wished to find a place—a boarding or lodging house, perhaps—closer to the river than the county seat. Did Judge Holmsted know of such a place? They would be in the vicinity for several days.

Masters of Holmacres, since that first one who had erected a mansion in what was at that time a wilderness, had been famed for their hospitality. Nor had they been content with the thought that the neighboring gentry only should be the recipients of their bounty; for that first one, a little strangely perhaps for one of cavalier forbears, had caused to be carved beneath the broad fire mantel in the central hall this inscription:

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Judge Holmsted was of that breed. "I couldn't think of letting you gentlemen stay anywhere but here." He spoke with a soft slurring of r's and a dropping of final g's which any attempt to put into print serves only to distort and make grotesque. "You must do me the honor of becoming my guests during your stay."

The older stranger demurred. "Why . . . that's awfully kind of you, Judge. But we really couldn't take advantage of your hosp—"

"You'll be taking no advantage at all, sir." There was no hint of subservience in the way the Judge said "sir." It was the courteous form of address toward strangers which had been the custom during his youth. "On the contrary, you'll really be doing me a favor. I'm an old man, gentlemen"—his smile would have won them had they really been hesitant at accepting his hospitality—"a little lonely at times, and I like company. And visitors, nowadays, are rare."

The strangers accepted the invitation with suspicious readiness. They hailed the ancient driver of the surrey, who had remained waiting in the driveway and who now brought in their luggage. For just a moment Judge Holmsted seemed ever so slightly embarrassed, a slight flush mantled his cheeks. And then, without stopping to think what it might mean, he created—'Lijah.

"Be seated, gentlemen," he invited, "while I call some one to bring in your baggage." He took a step toward the broad doorway. "'Lijah!" he called. There was no answer. He called again, more loudly, "'Lijah!" and still no one answered. Frowning, he walked to the end of the veranda, and peering about, shouted the name for the third time, with the same result as before.

He turned apologetically to his guests. "That trifling rascal," he explained, "is never about, particularly at this season of the year, when I need him." He glanced about for the driver of the surrey, but the old man had gone. "Come with me, gentlemen." Taking up their luggage, he led them within the house.

Though his welcome to the strangers had been extended in all sincerity (he had not been a Holmsted had it been otherwise) their coming brought a problem—another one—to the Judge. And, somehow, in his declining years life seemed to hold little else save problems, and all of them as yet unsolved.

Time had been when Holmacres threw its doors wide open to the countryside, for its masters had lived in the traditions handed down by its founder. Even now Judge Holmsted, daydreaming at times, permitted his thoughts to stray

back to the days when servants swarmed about the place; when there were stableboys who seemed actually to get underfoot, and house boys who fairly haunted the guests, eager to be of the slightest service. The big stable had contained riding and driving horses, which were not merely to be had for the asking but were almost forced on one. There had been dogs for the fall quail shooting, and master and guests had ridden to hounds. But now . . . it seemed that there remained little of misfortune that could happen. For of the hospitality for which Holmacres had been famous there existed but a shell, a shell so fragile that it might be crushed at any moment. Pity, too, that he, the last of his race, should not maintain the heritage which was his!

Had he belonged to that modern school which placed the mere god of commercialism above neighborliness, he might still have kept himself from actual want. But a friend in financial straits had come to him, and it was a neighborly act to indorse a note for a large sum of money. It was a hideous fate, though, that caused the friend to die, leaving an estate heavily encumbered, and forced the Judge to pay the indebtedness by mortgaging the home of his ancestors.

Even before this, though, the soil of Holmacres, planted for generations exclusively to cotton, had been growing less and less fruitful. Judge Holmsted had seen the yield dwindle year by year. He had divided the plantation into small farms for tenants. Then the northern exodus had begun; one by one the tenants had left, until now, with the few hired "hands" that he could secure, he was cultivating perhaps one-tenth of his tillable lands.

Still, for a time he had not experienced want. His salary as judge of the circuit—which position he had graced for thirty years—while not munificent had enabled him to make a pretense of the hospitality that had brought fame to Holmacres.

Then a new order of things came to pass. Politics was played with the precision—and the heart—of a machine. Those in control of the political destinies of the counties composing the circuit banded themselves together—that is, all of them save Judge Holmsted. Old-fashioned jurist that he was, he refused to lend himself to what he considered certain questionable pre-election machinations. Then the ultimatum went forth: he could submit or take the consequences—political oblivion. He accepted the gage, for he came not only of a hospitable but of a combative breed.

Hitherto his mere announcement that he would be a candidate for nomination at the Democratic primaries had assured his re-election. Now, for the first time in his life, he entered upon a vigorous campaign. He traveled incessantly about the various counties of his circuit, spending, legitimately, of his slender means. He made countless speeches, he met hundreds of friends, and received—promises.

He returned to the practice of law in Wynnesborough, but it seemed that his methods, like himself, had become old-fashioned. Friends insisted that he retained too much conscience to compete with more modern and, in certain instances, as he maintained, less ethical procedures than met his ideals.

"The practice of law," he had said once, when the matter came up, "is an honorable profession. It was never intended that it should degenerate into a display of legal acrobatics."

Clients were few and those who came were not always of the soundest financial standing. But there was always more or less bickering and litigation between the poorer class of hill-farmers, and some of these brought their troubles to Judge Holmsted. They paid their accounts in various ways: some brought small lots of cotton, others poultry and pigs, while one, an aged bachelor recluse of uncertain temper, just before his death had willed to the judge forty acres of land. This, people inclined to

be humorous asserted, was in the way of a subtle revenge, for the Judge, suing for the old man, had lost his case; and the hill forty, as it was known, was not considered worth the tax payments.

There had been excessively poor crops. Years, too, when the cotton raised had not paid operating expenses. Twice the Judge had borrowed money—which he still owed—in advance on his crops. And the present outlook, with the late spring rains and cultivation sadly hampered, was now worse than ever.

Even his plainly dwindling income did not cause him to forsake his ideals. These, he insisted, one must cling to, even though he go down with them. Certain other changes, though, had forced themselves on him. Horses and other stock had been sold, since the plantation would not longer support them in numbers. Now all that remained were a few work mules and the Judge's own mount, Grover Cleveland. Servants were dispensed with until all of them, save one, had gone. She stayed.

Christened Alabama, she was variously called Miz' 'Bama, Sis 'Bama, and 'Bama, the form of address depending on the degree of intimacy she permitted the speaker, the Judge and those of her race whom she considered her equals using the last named. She had remained at Holmacres after all the others had left, though her wage was more often a mirage than a reality. Latterly, continued urging by certain of her friends that she leave Judge Holmsted's service and go to the city, where her skill as a cook would return her a fabulous income, always met with scornful rebuff.

"But he ain't payin' you nothin'," the tempter would insist.

"'Sposin' he ain't?" 'Bama, hands on her ample hips, would face the speaker. "You is fergittin' somep'm, ain't you? What 'bout my social p'sition?"

Usually this ended the discussion, for 'Bama, born and reared in the atmosphere of Holmacres, was the recognized leader of her people in the vicinity. No wedding was complete without her in the role of general adviser and master of ceremonies; nor was any funeral fittingly held without her presence to lend due solemnity to the occasion. But sometimes argument failed to convince those who tried to tempt her. Then 'Bama would fall back on flat refusal.

"Go 'way, nigguhs!" she would command. "I wouldn't leave 'is heah plantation foh—foh a *hund'ed dolluhs a yeah!*"

So she remained steadfast at Holmacres as general house factotum for the Judge. It was 'Bama who tactfully reminded him, at those times when the larder became more depleted than usual, that supplies were needed. And it was she who, out of the merest nothing, could serve food fit for a king's banquet. It was 'Bama who attended to the laundry—carefully washing the Judge's shirts to save the frayed cuffs as much as possible—and looked after the scanty supply of household linen. She darned Judge Holmsted's socks, saw that his shiny coat was occasionally brushed, and kept him generally from being out at elbows in the matter of clothing.

Her manifold duties had brought her to the front of the house that afternoon when the Judge summoned the mythical 'Lijah. For a moment she listened in open-mouthed amazement. Then understanding of a sort came to her, as she peeped between the curtains and saw the strangers. For some reason Judge Holmsted wanted it understood that a personage who answered—or should answer—to the name of 'Lijah belonged about the place. And any undertaking that the Judge set on foot was worth seeing to its conclusion. While she lacked the Judge's creative ability, she could, at least, embellish that which he had made. Her first attempt was in evidence that evening when she served a supper that would have tickled the palate of a gourmand.

"Judge," she remarked, taking the privilege of an old servant, "does you know, suh, 'at triflin' 'Lijah ain't got back till yit?"

Judge Holmsted choked momentarily;

Drawn by Walter Biggs

he seemed to experience sudden difficulty with his food, but he recovered his self-control instantly.

"He hasn't?" he demanded sternly. "Won't he ever learn to come in on time? Tell him that I wish to speak with him the moment he gets in."

"Yessuh. I knows wheah he's at. He's down to 'at river, settin' out catfish lines."

'Bama had cast the die. Judge Holmsted's creation of 'Lijah had been the result of a sudden—and now inexplicable—impulse; probably, upon reflection, he would have made no further reference to him. But 'Bama had given entity to the myth; with a word or two she had made of it an outstanding personality: a house servant who, by implication at least, took whatsoever liberties he chose.

And suddenly the realization came to the Judge that his creation had been nothing short of inspiration. With the present state of affairs at Holmacres, numberless things were sure to happen which might cause embarrassment to one who sought to fill the role of dutiful host; and the lack of a perfect hospitality, in many instances, could be blamed on the erring—though mythical—'Lijah.

"He's one of the older servants about the place," the Judge explained casually to his guests. "Does pretty much as he pleases."

He followed this with a laughing remark about 'Lijah's fondness for fishing. It was almost impossible to keep a negro and a river apart when the catfish were biting.

"I'd like very much to see 'Lijah." It was the younger stranger speaking. "I've read so many stories dealing with Southern plantation life—and especially the old family servants—that I've often wanted to see one of them. And your man, 'Lijah, seems to be typical."

"Oh, he'll be about the place—off and on," the Judge assured carelessly. "And if you're interested in types, sir, you'll probably like 'Lijah."

Thus for the moment he dismissed 'Lijah. But 'Bama, apparently, was determined not to let the errant one off so easily, for, later, as the Judge and his guests entered the high-ceilinged living room, where portraits of earlier Holmsteds gave greeting from their oval walnut frames, she came to the doorway.

"Judge," she observed meaningly, "I don't 'spect you'll hahdly find no seegars. I seed 'Lijah sof'-footin' it round 'at sec'ta'y whilse I was dustin' 'is mawnin'."

Mechanically, Judge Holmsted's eyes sought the old rosewood secretary in one corner of the room, but before he could speak the younger stranger broke in with:

"Oh, that's all right, Judge." He was laughing heartily as he extended a cigar case. "Take one of these. So, he 'borrows' your cigars, does he? I've simply *got* to see him."

The strangers spoke of their business in the vicinity. The timber which they wished to inspect lay some miles away and, although their actual cruising of it would be done on foot, they would need some kind of conveyance to take them to their starting point. They supposed an automobile could be obtained in Wynnesborough?

Guests beneath Holmacres' roof had never been compelled to hire conveyances. It would have been unthinkable. The judge explained that the swamp roads were in such condition that an automobile would be impracticable. He had never bought a car himself for this reason. His guests must use one of the numerous horses about the place. He would have 'Lijah hitch one of them to the buggy. It would be the very thing for their trips.

When one of them, giving as an excuse their long railroad journey, suggested retiring, Judge Holmsted, first ascertaining that 'Lijah was nowhere to be found, led them up the broad, winding stairway to their room. He lighted the kerosene lamp. Then, carelessly turning back the bed covering, he stopped in

sudden horror. There was only one sheet on the bed!

He turned, his face crimsoning, to his guests. They had seen. "That trifling, worthless—" he began and stopped. "It's 'Lijah—of course, gentlemen—as usual," he said helplessly. "Come with me."

He led them to another room—his own—which for more than forty years no one save himself had occupied. This, he knew, would be in readiness. It always was, for he was fastidious about certain things, among them fresh bed linen. 'Bama attended to that.

"Just leave your shoes outside the door, gentlemen," he said in parting. "'Lijah will polish them."

He found 'Bama in the kitchen. Her answer to his question about the sheets brought home to him dishearteningly the scarcity of household linen.

In the library he picked up the latest issue of the Wynnesborough *Clarion*, a weekly newspaper published in the county seat, but he could not fasten his thoughts on the printed page. There were weightier things to be considered. Plainly, the visit of the strangers—should it prove of some duration—meant a still further drain on the slender resources of Holmacres. Since he had promised his guests the use of a horse, they would have to take Grover Cleveland. The Judge sighed. All of the work-mules were sadly needed, but he must use one of them for his daily trips to his office. By waiting until the strangers had left every morning, though, and remaining at his office till he was sure they had returned, they need never know of the subterfuge he had resorted to for their convenience.

Another matter claimed his attention: the disquieting letter—rather the letter that spelled doom—which had come that morning. The interest payment on the mortgage would be due shortly, and the letter stated brusquely that the mortgage had passed into other hands. Hereafter all payments must be met at maturity. Covetous eyes, Judge Holmsted knew, had long looked toward Holmacres. Once or twice he had succeeded in having his payments extended, but now . . . alien owners—people with no reverence for its traditions—would come into possession of the place. The thought was bitter—unbearable.

Once—more than twoscore years ago—the Judge had hoped that an heir might succeed to his name and estate. But with the passing of the one who could have made this a reality, this hope, too, had died. Better so, he comforted himself now; far better that the odium for failure to live up to Holmacres' heritage be his than that it should have been shifted to a son who would have borne his name.

He mounted the stairs. Just outside the door of his guests' room he found their shoes.

And that night—and for succeeding nights—he slept in the bed that had but one sheet.

But his guests at the breakfast table next morning probably thought that his only solicitude lay in planning for their well-being. He was sorry that, owing to 'Lijah's shiftlessness—the black rascal!—he had been compelled to make such short shift for them on the previous night. He hoped they had rested well.

After breakfast they found Grover Cleveland, freshly curried and rubbed till his coat shone like satin, hitched to the buggy ready for their trip. The vehicle itself bore signs of recent washing; the harness, too, one would have said, had been freshly oiled.

"I wonder how we're going to begin talking business to a man who treats us like members of his family," the older stranger said as he climbed into the vehicle. "We'll have to use a lot of diplomacy."

"We'll just remember," the younger man reminded, "that we've come several hundred miles to secure a property at as favorable terms to ourselves as possible. And that business is business—always."

Judge Holmsted waited only long enough to see his guests off. Then he

walked to one of the fields where a negro was plowing.

"Eph," he said, "I'll have to be using the mule for a few days."

"But, Judge, suh!" Eph stared, gaping. "Dis grass! It's plum' ram-pant since 'em las' rains, suh. Can't you see it's jus' nachelly chokin' de cotton to death?"

The Judge could see, plainly enough. The spindling stalks of cotton were struggling weakly through mazes of Johnson and Bermuda grasses. But he saw something else, too; something that Eph, being a recent comer, could not have seen or, seeing, could not have understood: there were guests beneath Judge Holmsted's roof.

It was the first time that he had ridden a mule since he was a boy. Often then, in a spirit of mischief, he had done so. Things had changed now. Horses . . . dogs . . . servants . . . gone. Everything! Everything save the will to be a hospitable host.

At the little bank in town he was courteously but firmly refused an additional loan. The bank officials liked the Judge—and sympathized with him—but his previous loans were still outstanding. And it was doubtful—exceedingly doubtful—that his crop that year would pay the cost of raising it.

But that evening, as he sat with his guests on the broad veranda, he was solicitous only as to the result of their investigations. Were they finding the hardwood timber of good quality? And was it in sufficient quantity to justify them in purchasing and logging it? He hoped this might be the case; he was looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to welcoming them as permanent neighbors.

He proved himself to be a raconteur of rare ability and charm. The grave-faced stranger seemed fascinated by his stories as he spoke of the days when steamboats from Mobile plied the Tombigbee daily. Now there were only one or two boats weekly. But then many were the gay parties that made the round trip. There was always a negro orchestra on board and stately men and beautiful women, after the dining saloon had been cleared, danced the schottische and the polka until the early hours of morning. More than once, too, a steamer had been forced to pull in to the bank while two young blades went ashore and settled their hot-blooded quarrels according to the code. Judge Holmsted sighed reminiscently. Those had been wonderful days.

The air was soft with the softness of Southern nights. There came to them, as they sat there, the odor of cape jasmine and the fainter but more caressing scent of honeysuckle. A light breeze rustled the leaves of the water oaks, shimmering now by the light of the full moon in a mantle of pure silver dust.

The younger stranger lighted a cigar and leaned back in his chair, sighing restfully, "Two weeks of this," he said, "and I shouldn't want to go home. You Southern planters lead an enviable life, Judge."

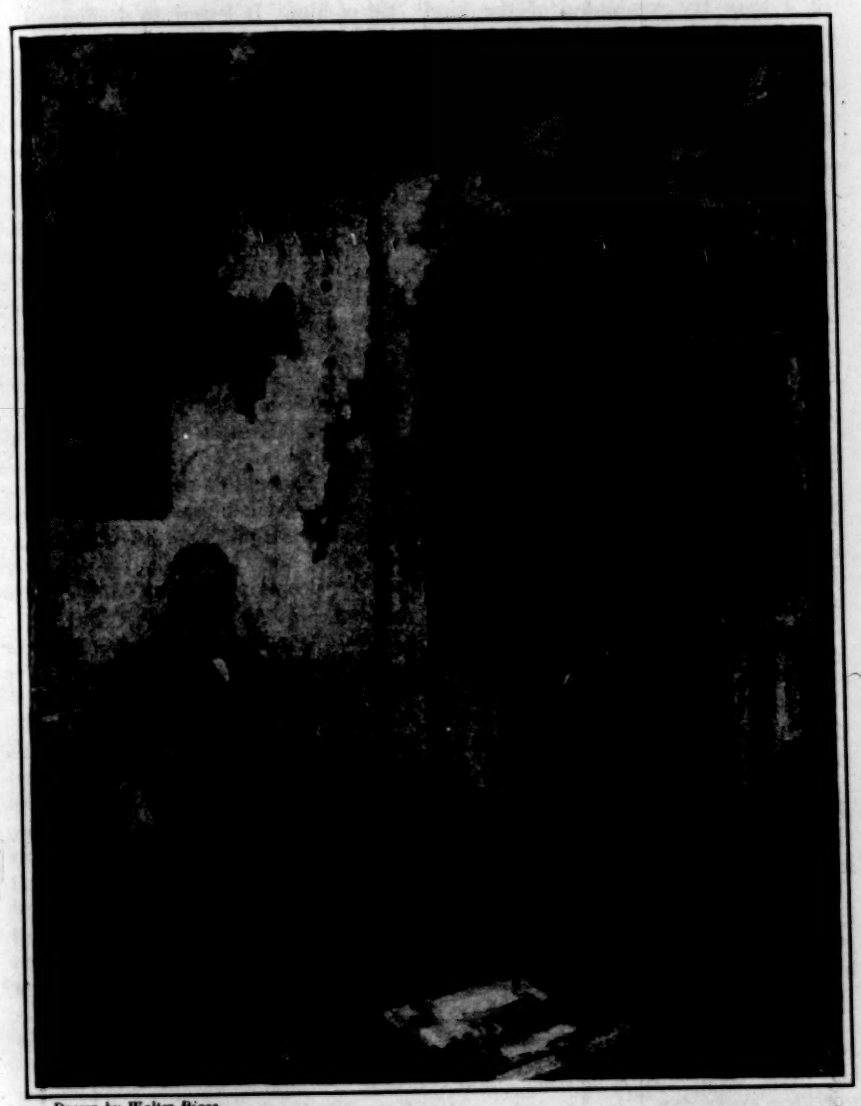
"It's enchanting," his companion assented.

"We like it, sir—some of us," the Judge admitted. He spoke with a tinge of regret of former neighbors who, one by one, had been lured away by the cities. Many fine old places had been left to the care of tenants and had speedily gone to ruin. But the Holmsteds, being lovers of the land, had always lived close to it. "Maybe we are more firmly rooted in the soil than some of the others were," the Judge said.

"It seems to me, Judge," the grave-faced stranger offered, "that you have a wonderful place here for a stock farm. Aren't these native grasses—I believe you call them Johnson and Bermuda—good for grazing?"

"Excellent, sir."

"That's just what I'd do with this place if I owned it," the younger stranger broke in. He was more outspoken than his elderly companion. "I'd divide it into pastures with good fences, build up-to-date barns and pig houses, and



Drawn by Walter Biggs

THAT EVENING HE SAT WITH HIS GUESTS ON THE BROAD VERANDA

stock it with blooded cattle and hogs. You've your grasses for spring and summer. And I understand that those river canebrakes make fine winter grazing."

"I may try something of the kind next year," the Judge admitted. "I've been thinking for some time of venturing along that line."

Venturing! Blooded cattle and hogs! Fences and barns, when the burning question was one of bare existence! Not that he had never had dreams. Many times he had pictured his broad lands dotted with droves of sleek cattle and herds of swine, with an income assured that would again crown Holmacres with its fair name for hospitality. But the realization of this dream would require money. . . .

It was the next morning that a mocking bird, nesting in a near-by tree, awakened the serious-faced stranger with its early song. Arising, he crept softly to the window and stood listening. And suddenly, as he looked out, he started and stared fixedly. Then a dull, red flush mounted slowly to his cheeks. He withdrew from the window even more softly than he had approached it and lay down again without wakening his companion.

But that morning brought consternation to Judge Holmsted. Modern plumbing had not been installed at Holmacres, and he remembered suddenly that his guests must shave. And there was one item that he had overlooked.

"I suppose, gentlemen," he remarked at the breakfast table, "that 'Lijah—you see I have to keep close check on him—brought you hot water?"

They admitted that he had not.

"He'll be the death of me, yet," the Judge said hopelessly, "if I don't wring his neck soon. He's getting more worthless every day."

The young stranger laughed. "You're more lenient with your servants, Judge, than we'd be in the North. They must attend to their duties there or they're discharged."

"But it's different with us, sir." The Judge smiled. "Take 'Lijah, for example. Been on the place all of his life—going on fifty years. I couldn't get rid of him. If I were to discharge him he'd refuse to stay discharged. He'd simply come sneaking back and I'd have to feed him."

The younger man's interest in 'Lijah was more intrigued than ever. Returning with his companion earlier than usual one evening, he sought out 'Bama. He was eager, he said, to see 'Lijah. But that worthy, as usual, failed to answer even when 'Bama, standing on the kitchen porch, called his name lustily several times.

"When does he sleep?" the stranger asked. "He doesn't seem to be around the place of nights."

"Sleep? Him sleep? You neentuh worry 'bout 'at, Cap'n. All 'Lijah needs is a sof' place on de shady side of a tree when dey's somep'm needs doin' round de house. He'll 'tend to de sleepin'. Dey's jus' two things 'Lijah's good foh: he de sleep-lovin'es' an' de catfish-ketchin'es' nigguh you eveh seed."

"He's typical all right," the stranger laughed. "And I must see him—I've simply *got* to see him before I leave."

Judge Holmsted found himself gradually forming a sneaking fondness for his creation. Maybe it was because he was unconsciously bringing into being an ideal. For 'Lijah was just the shiftless, work-dodging, cigar-pilfering type that the Judge would have loved—the kind that would run rabbits with his bird dogs—provided the Judge could afford the dogs—or slip his pack of fox hounds out on cold autumn nights—if the Judge should ever own a pack—for surreptitious 'coon and 'possum hunting. Yes . . . that would be just like 'Lijah. Indolent, grumbling always, complaining of a mis'ry in his side; absolutely dependent, thoroughly undependable—and utterly likable. In short, he would be perfect. The Judge even caught himself at times murmuring aloud, "The trifling black rascal!"

But such things—oh, well!—they were dreams, visions that an old man was seeing.

As the strangers showed no signs of terminating their visit, 'Bama, with visions of a rapidly depleted larder, began to experience a real concern. With only the Judge and herself to care for, she could have made shift of some sort. Maybe a hint to Judge Holmsted of the real state of affairs might not prove unavailing. So she tried, very diplomatically, one evening at the supper table, to sound a warning.

"Judge, suh," she remarked meaningly, "'Lijah is been 'mongst de chickens ag'in."

"What of it?" Judge Holmsted smiled on his guests. 'Lijah, he explained, was probably giving a party for some of his friends. "A few chickens, more or less, don't matter, do they, 'Bama?"

"But dese is *fattenin'* chickens, suh; de onlies' ones I had left."

"You don't mind 'Lijah entertaining his friends, do you?" the talkative stranger asked.

"Not gen'ally; no, suh. But he's been gittin' entirely *too* entertainin' lately."

"Doesn't he catch enough fish for his feasts?"

"Yessuh; he ketches plenty fish. But catfish, you knows, is just a nigguh's reg'lar eatin' victuals. Dey uses de chickens kind o' foh dessert."

"You must find his parties something of a drain on your resources."

"'Tain't no pahty, suh, he's givin' 'is time. It's just a shindig—a plain shindig."

The Judge explained that a shindig was a dance.

"Dance?" The younger stranger seemed amazed. "An old man like 'Lijah?"

"Him dance?" 'Bama gave answer. "Just de thoughts of a fiddle 'll send him shufflin' his feets 'cross de flo—right now! Age ain't purified him none."

'Bama, strictly orthodox in her religious beliefs, was patently outraged by this latest of the hapless 'Lijah's escapades, for as she left the room they heard her muttering:

"An' him wid gran'chillun! I's gwine to have him churched—I *sho*' is!"

Between themselves the strangers discussed the business which had brought them to Holmacres.

"It's showing up even better than the estimate we received," the older man said one evening.

"One of the richest deposits I ever saw," the other admitted.

When they went to their room he complained of not being in the mood for sleeping. The rays of that Southern moon, he said, must have affected him. He felt restless; he'd walk round a bit.

Five minutes later he returned quietly to the house, mounted the stairs softly, undressed silently, and went to bed.

The next morning as they seated themselves at the breakfast table, 'Bama's voice, raised in loud and indignant self-communion, was heard in the kitchen.

"Co'se, *he* don't keer! Out dere diggin' yearthworms to go fishin' wid an' lettin' all 'em cows an' ca'fs git together! Don't make no diffe'nce to him if us *don't* have no milk foh de cawfee."

It was much better, 'Bama reasoned, to blame this lack on 'Lijah than be compelled to admit that their only cow, bitten by a snake two days previously, had died.

But the younger stranger, usually so talkative when reference was made to 'Lijah, was strangely silent now.

Another day, as the visitors were dressing in their room, the more taciturn one spoke of their business. "I wonder," he asked, "if the Judge knows anything about the value of the property?"

"Oh, yes!" The younger man's loquaciousness had returned. "He knows all about it. I was talking to 'Lijah only yesterday—" he made sudden pretense of searching for something in his traveling bag—"and he said the Judge had received several offers for the property, but that he wasn't eager to sell. Saving it as a sort of nest egg, I was given to understand. In fact, 'Lijah said—"

"So, you've seen him?" At the first mention of the name, the serious-faced stranger had seemed surprised—almost startled. Then a look of comprehension—of complete and sympathetic understanding—lighted his grave features. And, as he smiled softly, tiny wrinkles creased the corners of his eyes. "What's 'Lijah like?"

"Just what I expected. Quite a character. Unique. He let me understand how these Southern planters feel about parting with any of their landholdings. From what 'Lijah said, the Judge probably wouldn't even name a figure if we were to approach him on the matter. And don't forget that it would be fatal even to think of trying any haggling or 'jewing down.' He doesn't want for money, with this plantation bringing in a steady income and all the servants he needs. That's not even considering what he gets out of his law practice. Now, I'd suggest—"

"Just a moment!"

At the interruption the voluble young stranger looked up from his traveling bag. Something that he saw—maybe it was the quiet smile in his companion's eyes—sent an answering flash into his own.

"We're partners," the serious-faced man reminded him, "and ought to be frank with each other. Just how long have you known the actual conditions here? That 'Lijah is a myth? That it's the Judge who has been polishing our shoes—"

"And washing that damned old buggy!" The younger man's face was crimson. "And letting us have his saddle horse—the only one on the place—while he rode a mule! Think of it! That hospitable old aristocrat! Poverty-stricken! My God, I—" He stammered and stopped.

"We both understand, I guess." The quiet-spoken man extended his hand, which was grasped in silence.

That evening they announced to Judge Holmsted that, having finished their inspection, they were ready to return home. After thanking the Judge for his hospitality, the younger stranger broached the matter of business. They were not only timberland investors, it appeared, but dealt also in other property. But, as he tried diplomatically to come to the subject uppermost in his mind, he seemed strangely ill at ease for one accustomed to business deals of magnitude. And finally, instead of the tactful approach which he had planned, he came very bluntly to the point.

"There's a deposit of mica on that hill forty of yours, Judge," he said simply. "Would you care to sell it?"

That old hill forty! Hope blossomed faintly in Judge Holmsted's breast. The strangers might—it was barely possible that they might—pay enough for that rocky, worthless waste to take care of that threatening interest note. If so, he was assured tenancy of his home for another six months. After that . . .

But the stranger was speaking again. "We realize, Judge, that, between gentlemen, there should be no haggling over such a thing as price. We've talked it over, my friend and I, and have decided to offer you just what the property is worth to us."

That faint gleam of hope flickered and died. Evidently the strangers considered the hill forty almost valueless. Foolish! Just an old man dreaming. . . Holmacres . . . home of his ancestors . . . home of hospitality. . . .

He heard the stranger's voice again. He was speaking rapidly. "We can offer you, for all rights to the land, fifty thousand dollars."

Fifty thousand dollars! One watching Judge Holmsted closely might have noticed a sudden throbbing of the blue veins at his temples; might have detected a slight tremor in the hand that went up, trying unconcernedly to stroke his gray goatee; might even have observed his other hand grip tightly for a moment the arm of the chair on which it rested. Maybe, in that brief instant, the Judge saw a dream fulfilled: broad fields fenced to pasture and dotted with sleek cattle

and fat swine; bottom lands, yellow with ripening corn; barns and outhouses, as befitted a vast estate; Holmacres, with its doors once more flung wide. . . .

But whatever might have been his emotions, he gave no evidence of them, as he answered with his usual grave courtesy:

"So far as I know, gentlemen, the matter can be arranged on that basis."

When the strangers left next morning he expressed regret that he could not accompany them to town, since urgent matters necessitated his presence on the plantation. They could leave Grover Cleveland and the buggy at the livery stable in Wynnesborough. He would send 'Lijah for them.

After they had gone he seated himself before the old rosewood secretary. Maybe he dreamed again . . . of quail hunting during the crisp months of fall . . . of fox hounds in their kennels . . . of servants. Servants?

Suddenly he drew up a sheet of paper and began writing in a firm, precise script. And when he had finished he scanned what he had written:

> WANTED: Negro house servant, male, aged fifty, or thereabouts, for light work in plantation home. Must be willing to answer to the name of Elijah. Apply B. L. H. care *Clarion*.

REVERBERATION

BY JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

AT night in the old house of life I lie alone:
Spiders have fastened their soft webs, like clouds, between
Rafter and ceiling; threshold and gray floor are grown
Heavy with dust, where for so long no foot has been.

Mice in the dark of the old walls gnaw at the deep
Roots of the night, and softly on the dewy air
The cricket's cry comes drifting in—even in sleep
I hear it; but I am too sorrowful to care.

Love has left me and Song has left me, and I know
I am a harp silent to all those lovely Things
That laid such hands upon me here so long ago.
Night deepens. Echo slumbers along the strings—

Only the murmur, vaguely felt, of the hushed blood
That on the shores of the old dream, like a vast sea,
Moves in the darkness, mourning; and in the solitude
Of my heart's forest a far horn sounds drowsily . . .

SMOKE BLUE

BY CARL SANDBURG

THE mountains stood on their bottom ends;
The smoky mountains stood around in blue;
The blue mountains stood around in smoke;

The higher the line of the timber climbed
The lower the line of the green timber crept;
The creep of the burnt and the green
Was a couple of shadows moving through each other.

The farms and the fences came,
And the farmers fixing fences.
The snake-rail fences measured the farms;
Hog-tight, horse-high, they held for the owners
The hogs for hams and the horses for hauls.

The farms came to the valley,
And the mountains stood on their bottom ends;
The mountains stood in a smoke and a blue.

The cities came, the lumber wagons,
The lumber carpenters, the lathers, the plasterers;
The bricklayers came in their overalls,
And the hod-carriers up and down the ladders with mortar
And the bricklayers calling down to the hod-carriers, "Mort!"
And the concrete mixers came with their endless bellies
For sand and crushed stone and gravel and cement;
The cities came, stood up, and swore, "This is us, by God,"
The cities, the families, the tall two-fisted men, swearing,
"This is us, by God, this is God's country."

The boomers boomed the boosters.
The boosters boosted the boomers.

And the mountains stood on their bottom ends.
The mountains stood in a smoke and a blue.

IS THE YOUNG PERSON COMING BACK?

BY ALEXANDER BLACK

THE suggestion that world reaction has produced a youngest younger set of a markedly new sort is not to be taken lightly. If a post-war younger set which was accused of taking itself very lightly could bring about some of the most solemn and apprehensive speculation our social life ever occasioned, a still newer youth may hold a portent which should be considered with a decent seriousness. Who is to say, offhand, that the new appearance may not mean something as momentous as the coming back of the Young Person?

The Young Person of tradition had a Cheek to which no one, on any account, must bring the Blush of Shame. The restraints imposed upon human society by the Young Person's cheek were enormously significant. This cheek became a kind of barometer, the reading of which regulated not only sociology but the arts; so that when, in the course of time, it seemed to be discovered that the cheek had ceased to be a surface and had begun to be a quality, that impudence had taken the place of demureness, social sentiment was staggered. Apparently, the shattering of standards from this cause alone inflicted one of the sharpest pangs of the War.

Of course, the Young Person had begun to fade long before the War. The image of that traditional cheek might be held with fanatical desperation, but its owner had ceased to be vivid. She was, it is to be noted, older than the Victorian. It has been the fashion to paint Victoria as her goddess. But she was born long before Jane Austen, Perhaps she reached the height of her influence in the middle of the nineteenth century, when she not only furnished Victorian literature with an inexhaustible theme but marked impressively a certain boundary. Her wistfulness threatened like a barbed barrier. It was what Darwin must do to her that made him an ogre. It was a theory about her which divided authors into sheep and goats. A literature was made for her. There began to be magazines that were her very own. She was not permitted to read honest-to-goodness novels. Sweet substitutes were provided. She nibbled these things, like chocolates, with an adorable resignation. She was sharply separated from her brothers. Coming-Outs were invented. When she was finished in some school she went forth into society. When she was married she went forth into life. She was to know nothing at all real until her husband chose to tell her. He was to decide what it was good for her to know. Knowing anything more was unwomanly. In fact, the system was beautifully devised to make her a hypocrite.

And she was a hypocrite. There was a pictorial charm and other attractions in her hypocrisy. Her father, having encouraged her to be a winsome liar, liked the effect. Her husband liked it. Even her sons learned or pretended to like it. But all this time she was a human being, living in the midst of other human beings. She had the job of living, and the job of knowing could not be diagrammed quite so easily as the system managers assumed. She might look like the theory on the outside, but inside she was, as the phrase runs, "someting else again." I quote from Montague Glass. As a man-made idea she was tremendously over-sexed—the stressing of a male conception of con-

trast in general and docility in particular. The thing she was asked to be belonged as completely to a strict male idealization as did the harem. So much for the theory, the plan. As a fact, she was simply the female of the species, basically a human being—incidentally female—and her natural instincts, whatever might be done about their expression, could not be thwarted completely by any æsthetic formula or counter sex prejudice.

The pretense could not last forever. The conspiracy between maleness on the one hand, and older women representing social interests, on the other, began to crumble, and the Young Person, meanwhile, refused to stay young enough or ignorant enough to give the plot any plausibility. The discovery that women were persons was followed by the discovery that even children were persons. A newer education introduced notions of human development which made it hard to hold in place the arbitrary rituals and schedules of a venerable system. Stodginess took fright. To this state of mind the beginning of the present century was the beginning of the end. If youth lost its innocence and began eating of the tree of knowledge before it had received permission to have a digestion, the gate of the garden must soon close against it. If youth went to the bad, what hope was there for civilization?

As usual, when civilization crumbled the world found something just as good. Viewing with alarm continued to be popular. The changing of the Young Person was indicated as appalling proof that the future held no hope. Manners were decaying. Youth that no longer cringed was mischievously defacing the temple. Education actually began to truckle instead of to mold. The modern girls' college became as different from the Victorian seminary as—well, as the modern girdle is different from the Victorian corset. Awful talk about evolution made it impossible to think of "finishing" a girl. Conservatism realized with chagrin that the world was frightfully unfinished, and that the girl, like the rest of it, was simply on her way. Girls went into business at about the time their brothers did. It was not feasible to keep on being a Young Person in a rush hour. You couldn't be wistfully withdrawn in daily sight of a dictating boss with a thick neck. A youth that mixed in affairs, that read newspapers, that began to get acquainted with the world it was living in could no longer be segregated. The sophistry of a special knowledge for a special age required conditions which had been brushed away. The truth is that youth always knew what it was old enough to find out rather than what it was old enough to be told, and the changed situation consisted mostly in the coming of something that was a little closer to honesty. Honesty meant acknowledged privilege, acknowledged responsibility. A society that set about abolishing classes was bound to find that the young had been made a class, and that this classification was as untenable as any other. The young were young, just as the ignorant were ignorant or the poor were poor; but the democratization of life, if it was a good theory, must mean that if poverty, for example, were not to be an imposed condition, neither was youth to be penalized for its youngness. The inherent penalties of being young, like the inherent penalties of being old, cannot be done away with. What democracy asked was that penalties should not be invented, that it was a useless and hazardous hardship to keep on asking youth to deny knowing the things it knew, to avert its head, to withhold its hands, to perpetuate hypocrisies about its "place." When woman stopped having a "place," so did her daughter.

The change spoiled an old picture that was supposed to be beautiful. The picture was beautiful when it was beautiful. Also it was hideous when it was hideous. Girlhood in that old picture could be, and by many a revelation often was, a maddening slavery. More frequently it merely dulled. Al-

Painting by Anna Whelan Betts

THE ARTIFICE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WAS A TRIUMPH OF ART

ways it tended to stultify. Emancipation brought the usual bewilderments. The strong who had habitually wiggled through were not hurt by the change. The weak had to find their feet in freer going. The new picture showed much confusion.

And then came the War, fear, hate, hysteria, and the flapper. Youth behaved like the rest of the world. It would have been comforting to have had youth ignore the delirium, to have had it wait, close to the gate like good children, until the excitement was over. Unfortunately, the excitement lasted a long time and the factor of example had its effect. Youth made a free translation of mature conduct. Generally, the translation was quite faithful to the original. The young girls' clothes mimicked the old girls' clothes. When so many social safeguards came tumbling down, it would have been asking a good deal to demand that youth keep its fences carefully mended.

The spectacle of the flapper has been painful as a picture and as a symptom. We did not need the cartoonist to tell us that the flapper could be funny. Street giggles anticipated the print. Yet she was less funny than the prototypes. Painted nakedness can take on a genuinely comic cast only in the mature. In the young this funniness carries a disturbing note. Perhaps the saddening effect of the typical flapper has depended upon the age of the spectator, upon the acuteness of any sense of implication; or, let us say, upon the sense of humor. How much the flapper has represented the legitimate joy of youth, how much a devastating loss of restraint, how much pure neurasthenia has been open to all sorts of opinion, and there has been plenty of opinion.

It is to be remarked that lightened domestic discipline for the young inevitably places a special tax upon the instincts of daughters. The son is always more definitely under the discipline of circumstances. In the matter of manners, for example, the son is constantly subject to the stress of an operative criticism. He can be knocked down. His queer hat can be knocked off. A trace of loudness or preciosity in his clothes is sure to elicit more than a guffaw. He is reminded that a mere mannerism may block his business progress. He is constantly in the presence of codes.

Outside the home the discipline of the girl is much less closely codified. Fashion is, indeed, a kind of pressure, yet it is an excitement rather than a discipline. The sanction of fashion is fashion. The boy who starts in to sow his wild clothes is not only brought up with a round turn somewhere, but is roughly or otherwise reminded that man does not live by clothes alone. The wherewithal for clothes puts a tax on ingenuity which both sexes must meet; the disparity appears in the young man's need to buy entertainment for Her.

There is the story of the young man who asked the city girl whether he might call on a certain evening. In a homelier era girls studied various arts of entertainment applicable to times when men called. They made fudge or played the piano. There was recognition of a balanced interchange by which she presided over a home evening and he provided adventure at the county fair or town hall. We do not know precisely what was in this young man's mind when he strode forth, whether his expectations were flagrantly sentimental or quite without dream elements of detail. We know only that he was misled. "When I got there," he said, "*she had her hat on.*"

Before we measure the calamity to the young man who was, as this story went, forced to spend four weeks' savings to meet the presumptions arising from the fact that she had her hat on, we should remind ourselves that this girl had no parlor or piano. She slept in a flat called home, but she lived largely in the great open spaces of a city. Her notion of an evening was going somewhere, and in these great open spaces

Painting by Anna Whelan Betts

NEITHER REVOLUTIONS NOR WARS COULD DEPRESS THE FLAPPER OF 1800

going somewhere means money. Thus entertainment became a responsibility belonging solely to him. Her contribution was her company. He contributed *his* company, but this, in common practice, is to be estimated as of lesser value since he must add the money to balance the bargain. Under these circumstances the morality of the young woman's position is full of subtleties. I cannot make it seem less than cruel to deduce that, if her company is worth more than his, her company must by these terms be sold to him. It is always fascinating to watch her shrug out of the dilemma, as if the dilemma were nothing of the kind; and the niceties of the argument (I mean the theoretical argument, for no one really *does* argue about it) are still further complicated by the fact that the young man, discovering that she must be bought, likes to buy her when he happens to have the money.

Among young men to whom money considerations are no embarrassment, going somewhere received lively encouragement. Home and its arts went out of date. The domestic phonograph gave a certain impetus to impromptus in dancing, but the motor horn furnished a more potent music. Doing anything without a car became equivalent to doing nothing at all. Social life ceased to mean assembly. Chiefly it chugged. When we are through with all other analysis, the automobile will remain the most conspicuous of explanations for the transformation of social forms. All human functions for the enterprising fell into the classification of things you might do while the car waited. So far as the young girl was concerned, the duenna had long since disappeared. The chaperone, after becoming a non-intrusive joke, was finally forgotten. The automobile took her place as the third party.

For the sentimental the flapper era was, indeed, a fearful disenchantment. The one thing that era seemed particularly to repudiate was being sentimental. So much emotion had been wasted on a mere war that a great many springs went dry. There were signs of a wish to accentuate rebuke of all sentimentalism about feminine modesty. I fancy that as an era it was less deceitful than some of its lamented predecessors. Humanity, young and old, may have been finding various avenues of Freudian "escape." We were reminded, for example, that sensuality came in with clothes. There was no difficulty, on these lines, in arguing for fewer concealments—this era specialized in exposure. The spiritual parallels are equally tenable. If inhibitions make for hypocrisy, and we hate hypocrisy, why have inhibitions? If complexes make trouble, why generate complexes in the sensitive years by saying "Don't"? Nothing could be easier than such a plan of escape. There is something wrong with the plan. One cannot linger over it long without realizing that it leaves out something. The thing it leaves out is the thing the hustling American business man most insistently looks for in his business: it leaves out the vital element of results, that total of the sum which the most ambitiously liberal among us has to estimate at last.

There are two especially interesting implications to a "don't" either in life or in art. One is the implication that the expert may counsel the novice. The other is the implication that control serves expression. Conservatism, wringing its hands, asks frantically: if we may not be taught and must not take command of our instincts, what invention is to supply the place of these expedients?

Of course, there is no such crisis. The social disturbance started by the poison of the War had not the dignity of a revolution. It was not even a disease. It was only a paroxysm. It was, in the first place, the flowering of a social liberty with which American theory had let itself experiment. Moreover, the flowering was forced, as when you put hot water on the stem of a cut plant. The War fevered all relationships. It hurried a cycle.

Painting by Anna Whelan Betts

THE FLAPPER OF TO-DAY IS FREEDOM PERSONIFIED—AND COLOR

I have (as you will have noticed) ventured to speak of the flapper in the past tense. Technically she "went out" some time ago. The easily pleased who can get comfort out of the pendulum image are sure that the swing to safety has set in. Perhaps something less stultifying than automatic reaction has really happened. Of itself, a lowered temperature is no proof of returning wisdom. Yet betting on American sanity is supposed to be betting on a sure thing, and it may be a patriotic duty always to be getting ready for the entry of an undebatable common sense, even of common sense about the young.

Assuming that a change has set in, how will it be manifested in the young? What is to be the new attitude toward the young, and what is to be the attitude of the new young? It would be absurd to suppose that any social stock-taking could be likely to result in the reapplying of ancient formulas of authority. Parenthood might try putting on the lid again, but no disposition to do so would meet the case. The spirit of youth has escaped from the old container. It must be bargained with. A change which the young did not "get" on its own account would not be one from which we ought to look for sure returns. The notion of a bargaining would have been shocking to ancient disciplinarians, yet something of the kind, however cloaked, has always been going on. To-day's difference is created not only by changed theories of possible pressure but by a franker feeling about personal choice.

The degree of rightness in the decisions of the young may fall just so far below the decisions of the older, but, if you will pardon the platitude (on the way along, we pull out a truism like a watch or a compass), wisdom has no age and instincts antedate knowledge. We have to live before we know how. There seems to be no way of rearranging that. And this fact keeps on giving a dramatic twist to all decisions. At the moment there is the effect of a world of young and old returning sullenly, sheepishly, whimsically, defiantly, to truisms. The fascination of the different, the sheer refreshment of getting away from old stuff, are explanation enough for many a fling. It is the yardstick or the commandment—the fact or force of which cannot be denied—that present a constant temptation to run. These explain quite as fully the comfort of coming back home. Even a wise radicalism is apt to forget its daily dependence on the basic. Soon or late every excursionist into delirium must return to the real things—to beauty, babies, character, and other fundamentals. I suspect that youth, like age, is capable of discovering that the north star is quite where it used to be.

The flapper herself, it is indicated, found out that flapperism didn't pay. This is not to endow her with any special sagacity. I do not mean that she really saw what had been happening, that she had a glimmering of either the tragedy or the comedy of herself. I mean that in the end she felt the pressure which is the definite regulator of human conduct—the social pressure which has so many ways of making itself felt, in a school yard as well as in a jail yard, a ballroom, or a legislature. The young may never, on their own account, discover that theories of conduct were not arbitrarily invented, but they are quick to get the results of their own experiments, not in logic but in response. The exhilaration of chucking tradition, of being ingeniously shameless—which we have seen in artistic conduct as well as in social conduct—may never be rebuked by the discovery that tradition is simply the accumulated results of previous experiments, and that a sense of these results is what we call culture; but it cannot escape the discovery that it really needs and has looked for response. When response fails, when our own class, applying the closest pressure, shows apathy or disgust, the game palls.

Certain traditions are very important to the young girl. Efforts of charm or

of mystery represent a significant asset not to be overlooked by self-interest. She may abandon mystery, as in the dressing of her body or her mind, and diminish the chance that some one will marry her out of curiosity; but giving up charm is another matter. She may act on a wrong theory, yet the human stuff she is made of precludes the likelihood that she will ever consciously give up her lure. Ordinary feminine shrewdness was bound to tell her after a while that the lure had faded, that she might be picturesque, that she might be a good diversion, but that she had begun to look like a poor investment. In the end she was sure to find that being regarded as a good investment was at the very front of her interests.

Not her interests alone have whispered to the young girl. She does not escape having at least rudimentary ideals, a fine or frivolous sense of destination—it is in youth that ideals are born if they are to be born. And ideals finally draw her glance to the compass. The social compass tells her that, though outward signs be subject to revision, though the language of life be in a state of flow and formation, no one has budged the simple fundamentals. Allowing for eccentricity and high spirits and plain frailty, we still admire a gentleman, still uncover reverently before that feminine equivalent from whom the washlady has stolen the name. Unless theory or practice can modify our sentiment of admiration for a certain sort of man and a certain sort of woman, it is unlikely that youth will ever lose a sense of these images. So long as this admiration is acknowledged we are not destitute of a clear-shining incentive to young adventurers.

The Young Person's descendant, the exuberant freshman to whom the flapper has become a sophomore, enters a situation with all the old perils intact but in which there is less noise and an admonitory wreckage that will hardly escape her attention. In her freedom to see and to hear she will know that some things have not paid. She will find fundamental things thrown into a certain relief by the subsidence of the clamor and the clearing away of the dust. She will raise a merry dust of her own with her car. It may be that she will like the radio better than reading. That will depend much upon her family's state of development. She will not be a knitter—certainly she is not by way of being a *good* knitter—and she will never, like her remote ancestor, aspire to be pale. Neither will she be demure or *dévote*. She comes into a nervous, hustling, self-conscious world, a world of reforms and efficiency and dotted lines, that talks slogans in its sleep, and no one will expect her to sit by the ingle with her hands in her lap. She is likely to live where there isn't any ingle, and where it is necessary to invent some other symbol suggesting that one may stay at home; she may, indeed, be further prophecy of that day when each individual's home will be under his hat. It will give her a good laugh to recall the days when girls carried their hats in their hands and ate lip paste with their meals. She will have the newcomer's advantage of not missing the things which in an earlier era she would have thought she needed. She will see through the cheap pose of being bored. It will not amuse her to be *blasé*. She inherits a jazz called classical, a slightly lessened responsibility as to dreams, a complete map of sex, and a routine knowledge that the brontosaurus would be a living factor to-day if they had taken out its tonsils. She will not know for a long time that each era seems feverish to the survivors of the one before. She will take herself and the United States, if not outlying parts, for granted, and have a privilege profounder than her ancestors' of making her own mistakes.

Whatever these mistakes may be, she will make them in an enormously illuminated world. If she is differently foolish she will find herself under a spotlight. If she is humanly sensible she will be printed and pictured anyway to please

those who insist that everybody must be either young or scandalous. She will have heard that wedding notices should be put in the amusement column. Cynicisms about the sacred will be too commonplace either to shock or to amuse her. The noise of them will be old to her before she begins to think deeply, since she will have heard everything. Not to be able really to "come out" because she has never been in, will mean that nothing can strike her suddenly. She will be no more subject to social surprise than a girl brought up on a farm would be open to astonishment about orchards or cattle. Not being able to be wistful about weddings, she may come a shade nearer to belief in the theory that staying married is simply being a good sport, even if she reserves the right to quarrel with the rules committee.

Her world will tell her that it has been disenchanted. Sour preserves will not interest gatherers of fresh fruit. And she will see spring as they may see it who do not remember too many autumns, see it with the penetrating, wonder-working glance of youth. In her ignorance she will make her share of blunders, and by the divinely precious good fortune of not knowing that certain great things can't be done, will go ahead and do them. We have been promised a period of romanticism. Who knows that the notion may not appeal to the flapper's successor, and that she may not usher it in? Certainly, it cannot happen without her connivance. She may attain great concessions. Who knows that some one may not contrive, for example, to make gentle speech fashionable, and that she may not, after hearing the shrillest voices in the world, herself become low-voiced? It would be a fearful radicalism, but at this juncture romanticism would be radical and, after all, the flapper's successor may hate the noise as much as the rest of us do. Who will venture to predict that, though she may refuse to be a hypocrite and will know too much to be enslaved by any awe, she may not, indeed, find high satisfactions in the sheer art of being a young girl—in rehabilitating an art by whose vicissitudes all other arts are delayed in coming back?

AFTERMATH

BY CORINNE REINHEIMER

YOUR mute hands lifted to my lips
A fragile, moon-white grail.
Thin, silvered grape leaves wreathed its brim;
So cool it seemed and frail,
Laughing I sipped its perfumed draught. . . .
Swift, swift its anodyne—
I had not known how magic-sweet
Could be the taste of wine—
For when the dawn came singing in,
An empty cup was there:
Gone was the golden wine, but now
The leaves are in my hair.

TRUMPERY

BY SUSAN ERTZ

IT was the sort of day that inspires tourists to buy gaudily colored post cards and, sitting at marble-topped tables with coffee cups beside their elbows, to write:

"Monte Carlo looks just like this to-day. Having a lovely time. Wish you were here. Love to the children."

Monte Carlo did look like that. The sky and sea were of too brutal a blue, the mountains too sharply outlined, the unnatural grass too green, the flowers too crudely bright, the marble and the white paint too dazzling to be "true to life." The whole thing was expensive musical comedy without the music. Even nature had lent itself to the deception. The sea, with no appearance of either life or depth, lay like a painted canvas. The palm trees in the public gardens had forgotten the honest mother sand that bore them. The flowers, pranked out in stiff mosaics within stars, squares, and diamonds, might have been laid down by the yard.

A girl came out of the mouth of the Casino and stood undecided on the steps. She saw the crowding blue mountains behind the town as the drop curtain of a stage on which, for a little while, she played the leading part. A Frenchman who looked upon sixty as the prime of life had followed her from the gambling rooms and now stood behind her, brushing some specks of dust from his sleeve, aware of her indecision and rightly connecting it with a consciousness of his presence and a desire for lunch. He had just seen her lose a hundred francs, and although he judged from her appearance that the loss was not of the most serious nature, it was still possible that it might have incommoded her.

She was tall and blue eyed, and her fair hair, untidily arranged, drooped from under a large white hat. Her dress of blue china silk was too thin for April even on the Riviera, and she wore over it a white-cloth coat that evoked for him little English scenes connected with bicycling and tennis. Her features were regular, her expression good humored. He saw that she loved pleasure, and that she wished to please and be pleased.

Three minutes later they were walking together toward the Café de Paris.

She had no strong convictions as to the food she would like to eat or the wine she would like to drink. She begged him to suit himself. What he would like, she said, she would like. He smiled more broadly at this and his eyebrows mounted higher. She thought him very well groomed and told herself that he was certainly a man of the world. Old enough to be her father, possibly, but there was a jaunty, holiday air about him that pleased her. Out of doors he wore his gray overcoat like a cape, buttoned about his shoulders regardless of its dangling sleeves. His gray felt hat, too, was placed slightly on one side of his head. He moved youthfully and briskly. His dark blue suit was well made and fitted his full figure admirably. Beards, as a rule, she disliked, but his was more like an imperial than an ordinary beard. You could hardly truthfully call it a beard, and it gave a distinguished, pointed look to his round face.

She pulled off her gloves that were of washing suede and smelled innocently of soap, and the interest in his smiling eyes was immediately sharpened. She had beautiful hands. She stretched them out and they were white as milk

and her fingers spread prettily, the tips curving back just enough to be agreeable to the eye. She spread those rounded, finely pointed fingers as a peacock spreads his tail. So would she spread them were some one to place a new ring upon one of them, and she would tilt her fair head this way and that, admiring the effect . . . adorable! Her hands were bare now; no trumpery bit of turquoise set in cheap yellow gold marred their smooth beauty. She should wear a single jewel caught on a thin hoop of platinum . . . a brave, important jewel . . . on the little finger of her right hand. He liked the right hand a shade better than the left.

In his suave, correct English he drew from her replies to his questions. Was it not so that she was abroad for the first time in her life? Come, come, why not be frank with each other? Surely, surely, everyone must some day travel abroad for the first time. The first time . . . what a lark, eh? And was she not perhaps too carefully and tediously chaperoned, and had she not escaped to-day just for a taste of freedom . . . a little taste . . . ?

"No, you're wrong," she corrected him. "I'm abroad for the first time, but I'm here alone. I came over as companion to a French girl, but she got married all of a sudden and that left me without a job. I've got enough to get home on and a month's salary, so I thought I'd see life for a bit. I'm staying in diggings here. Are you staying in Monte, too? Oh, Nice! That's quite a long way off. It's great fun being on your own, my word, it is! Why, I've had adventures enough already to fill a book."

She laughed, and her companion smiled at her and stroked his beard.

"Well, well; and these adventures . . . what were they like? Tell me."

She colored and looked down at her finger nails.

"Oh . . . you wouldn't call them that, I don't suppose, but they might have been. You know . . . a girl has to have some fun. There's a young Swede where I'm staying . . . I called him the Blond Beast at first, but he's as gentle as a lamb now. He eats out of my hand. He's got white eyebrows. And there was Henri . . . the man my friend married . . . yes, even after he was engaged to her he wasn't above trying to carry on with me. Men are . . . well!" She spread out her fingers, looked at them, and then looked up, smiling. "Aren't they?"

"They are very beautiful," he said. "I speak of your hands. Very, very beautiful. Don't you know that?"

"My hands? Are they? Well . . . I thought they were nice as hands go, and I look after them a bit better than most do, but I don't think anything counts for very much except faces, do you? Faces and figures."

He leaned toward her, still smiling.

"Do not misunderstand me if I say that I like your hands best."

She flushed and dropped them in her lap, out of sight.

"Well, I must say, you are . . . !"

"No, no!" he cried. "No, no! Do not hide them, please, please do not."

"All right." She raised them again and rested her chin upon them, self-consciously. "Only I don't understand Frenchmen, and I suppose I never shall."

"Ah." He had fifty smiles, that man, all different. He raised a thin glass in which little points of light shot upward. "To your better understanding of all Frenchmen through knowledge of one."

She too raised her glass, boldly.

"And here's hoping that one will be you," she said, and as he bowed she laughed at her own boldness.

Eggs on spinach under a rich cheese sauce followed the *hors d'œuvres*. Veal cooked in cream with truffles followed them both. Then came pale, beautiful asparagus stalks, shading delicately to their green tips, and as she ate them her hands looked white as lilies and her fingers like the fingers of La Gioconda. The Frenchman's smile was as suave as

ever. He read her as easily as he read the wine card and as comprehendingly.

"And in England," he was saying, "in England. What do you do there? You live in the country, you say. I think that in the summer you play tennis with young men. There are perhaps one or two favored ones whom you allow to put their arms about your waist and kiss you, on warm evenings. You like it, but you are a little ashamed. You walk down your lanes, saying very little to each other. You tell no one, except perhaps a girl friend. Am I right?"

"You're simply uncanny!" she cried, putting down her coffee cup. "Uncanny! Well, what else do you know, you . . . you wizard?"

"I think you are a good daughter to a father or mother, I do not know which. Perhaps both. I think you work at something, but I do not know what."

"I ran the typewriting office in our village," she said, "until I got the chance to come here. I've run it since I was seventeen, and done half the typing myself. I'm twenty-five now. Eight years. . . ."

He closed his eyes.

"With those hands . . . !" He opened his eyes again to say, "But all the time you are working, all the time you are playing, you dream dreams, always of a man. Of a strong, older man who will understand and dominate you. Who will make love to you . . . *savamment*, I do not like your word 'knowingly' . . . and whom you would therefore follow to the ends of the earth. He will offer you marriage, and you will say, 'Does that matter when I love you?' But he will not accept your sacrifice, though he has never offered marriage to any woman before. He will marry you. He will revere you all the more for your generosity. You will be exquisitely happy and rich, and have two children, a boy and a girl, in the order that I have named."

Her coffee spoon fell with a clatter.

"Lord! How you do understand! You give me the creeps, I swear you do. How do you know all this?"

"You are a woman," he said, smiling. "Restricted, romantic, young. Our dreams are whatever our lives are not. Tell me your life and I will tell you your dreams."

"But we're not all like me . . . surely we're not all like me?"

He made no answer to that but tilted his head back and the smoke curled slowly upward from his bearded lips.

"And this afternoon, child, what shall we do, eh?"

Her heart leaped. The afternoon, too!

"Anything you like. I don't care."

"Gamble?"

"No, thanks. I've had enough of that. Oh, I say! There are the Olympic Games on . . . the girls, you know. I'd love to see them."

"The girls . . . yes, we will go. Strong young female athletes, one day to be mothers. It is like teaching flowers algebra. We will go."

But outside the clouds—vaporous, low, and full of rain, came down over the shoulders of the mountains like wet torn blotting-paper and put out the fire of the sun. In a few seconds the world was gray and streaming and cold, and the palms dripped and sawed their branches, and shiny umbrellas opened everywhere. But as the rain continued even they disappeared, and only the man with the overcoat buttoned about his shoulders like a cape, and the girl in the white coat seemed to have nowhere to go. Then at length they hailed a hooded *fiacre* and crept inside, and it drew them to the top of the public gardens and down a long street beside tram lines, where awnings flapped and dripped, and pedestrians huddled hopelessly in doorways. Inside the *fiacre* a man's voice spoke quietly, suavely, persuasively.

The cab stopped in front of a jeweler's, and after a little wait the two got out and entered the shop. There, little trays were displayed for them, one after the other, and were banished. But over

one tray the man's hand hovered for an instant and then descended. He had made his choice. That was the ring for her finger.

"Put it on."

Off came the glove, smelling of soap. The little finger . . . yes, that was the finger for the ring. He held it lightly. He put the ring on himself as she hesitated. Stepping back, he watched.

Ah, that hand, that divine hand! The fingers all aspray and curving back at the tips, the emerald glowing like distilled summer. She bent her fair head this way and that, cheeks suffused with color, eyes alight . . . adorable! It was exactly as he had hoped it would be, exactly as he had seen it in his mind's eye. He was satisfied.

"The ring is yours, my child. Keep it."

He turned to the jeweler, note case in hand.

How her heart beat! He hadn't even asked the price . . . he must be very rich indeed . . . and what a man! Dominating, eccentric, extraordinary. This was life, life, life! The word drummed in her ears, loudly. Life, life, life! She turned away from the two men. She raised the ring to her mouth and felt it icy against her lips. Her darling ring. Out went her hand again, with the cold green fire flashing upon it. Beautiful! Why had no one ever told her before how lovely her hands were? Each finger was unique, perfect. She felt his touch on her arm.

"Come."

It was still raining heavily, pitilessly. They drove to the Aquarium at Monaco and looked at the wonderful fish. He kept close beside her all the time and never stopped smiling, but he never touched her. There were dark places, too . . . the men she knew at home would have put a hand on her waist or an arm about her shoulders. He knew a great deal about all sorts of sea things, and he talked cleverly. She kept her glove off and every now and then he said, "Let me see," and she would raise her hand and hold it out for him in the strange little green light of some little ocean where beautiful colored fish flickered and turned behind the glass.

The *fiacre* took them to Monte Carlo again. It was still raining. The driver had not been told where to go, and they were back now, where they had started from. Well . . . what next?

"*A la gare*," the man inside called out to him, and he made strange sounds to his horses and cracked his whip.

They took the train to go to Nice just as it was getting dark. They found an empty first-class compartment and sat in corners, facing each other. She had never ridden in a first-class compartment with a man before. She wondered if they would have it to themselves all the way.

There was a great commotion outside . . . laughter, and high, excited voices. People came crowding onto the train just as it was about to start, talking and laughing. Girls . . . they were all girls. What a lot of them . . . dozens . . . all talking in some queer language she didn't understand. Oh, the Olympic Games, of course. They all wore badges. But what were they? Norwegians? Belgians? Swedes?

"Czechs," he told her, and added, smiling, "young athletes."

She nodded.

The train was filling up. The girls came crowding into their compartment. They occupied all the empty seats and still others came and perched on the knees of their friends, laughing and talking all the time. Everything seemed a joke to them. What high spirits they were in! The games had had to be postponed because of the rain, and still everything was glorious and amusing. She looked at each one of them in turn.

Opposite her sat a plump, fair girl, and a serious, dark, impassive one with a fine throat and a deep, deep voice like the voice of an oracle. When she spoke they all listened. Next to her sat a slender, pretty creature who laughed

excessively at everything that was said. She was flushed and helpless with laughter. On her lap sat a younger girl with short hair and a freckled face. A minx, that one. On the other side of the slim, laughing one sat a great Amazon with ropes of reddish hair. A magnificent young woman, but not pretty. In the far corner sat one who seemed to be in a position of authority. She was treated with great affection and little respect. Their talk was as rapid and unintelligible as the talk of birds. What splendid, healthy young creatures! Oblivious to everything and everyone but themselves. She glanced at her companion. He sat in his corner with his coat wrapped about him, looking under drooping eyelids at the girls, smiling and amused. They paid not the slightest heed to him or to her. He leaned forward presently and touched her on the knee with his gloves.

"Let me see," he said.

She held up her hand once more, turning it this way and that, spreading out her fingers. The ring flashed and glowed under the dim lamp. In the semi-gloom of the carriage her hand looked paper-white.

The girls' clamor increased. One of their companions was passing the open door of the compartment and they seemed to be calling her to come and join them, but she shook her head.

She was dressed in black and under her severe black hat her hair fell in two thick, fair braids. Her profile showed up cameolike against the black square of the window. What loveliness! The heart of the girl in the white coat was suddenly hushed, and something in her spirit moved its wings as she looked at that serene and perfect face. She was like a new blade first drawn from its scabbard; like young green wheat; like the silver curve of the new moon at sunset; like scented flowers at night with the dew on them.

A young athlete . . . she gave no heed to her noisy friends but looked out of the window where she could see nothing, and thought her own quiet thoughts; possessed, steady-eyed, and calm. . . .

"Let me see," said the man again, and reached for her hand, but she shook her head and drew it back. The train rocked and clattered on its way to Nice. The girls talked and laughed. The lovely one standing in the aisle held the rail with both hands and looked out into the night. The Frenchman looked at the girl in the white coat, smiling indulgently at her.

Trumpery . . . that's what she was . . . trumpery. That man smiling at her and watching her like a cat. That bit of green glass on her finger and what it would end in. . . .

How had he known, that man, what she was like? Was it written in her face? Did thoughts, wishes, tendencies write themselves in one's face, so clear that he who ran might read? Or was it just a lucky shot? You couldn't tell, with men.

She looked back. She remembered the young men at home with their encircling arms and their hot hands. She thought of the young Swede. She thought of Henri . . . and the others. A girl had to have some fun. . . . That was what she had always said.

He was still smiling at her . . . he was always smiling . . . but she saw that behind that smile sat a man who bought what he wanted. A good buyer. He knew what he wanted . . . he knew what he could buy, too, and how much he would have to pay for it. He knew what was trumpery . . . he knew.

The noisy ones called to the girl standing in the aisle, and she turned and smilingly shook her head. Her clear eyes met the eyes of the girl in the white coat and for an instant they lingered there. What years, what miles, what whole countries apart they were; and yet when their eyes met they looked at each other like friends . . . like sisters almost.

She turned away again and the heart

of the girl in the white coat was beating as though she had passed through some strange experience . . . some crisis.

Rocking, the train slowed down and came to a standstill. Lights gleamed outside, reflecting themselves in puddles; bright little lakes that were shattered by the hurrying feet of travelers.

"Villefranche!" shouted the guard. The rain whipped against the windows, and the girls heard it and laughed.

"Let me see," said the man again.

She fumbled with her hands. She slipped the ring off her finger and held it out to him.

"You hold it for me, just for a minute," she said.

She went out into the aisle. The man held the ring up to the light, turning it this way and that, delighting in its beauty. He had seen many fine emeralds, but never one with a better color than this. Lovely! And on that hand!

"*En voiture!*" shouted the guard. "*En voiture!*"

The train started with a jerk. Soon it was rocking and clattering on its way. The man looked up and down the aisle. He saw only the girl in black, holding to the rail, and some of her companions. He waited. The girl in the white coat did not come back. She was not coming back. He understood.

He dropped the ring into his pocket, drew his coat about his shoulders, and settled himself more comfortably in his corner. He still smiled.

"Foolish," he said to himself. "And in this rain. Foolish!"

The water ran down the windows, seeped through the cracks, and lay in little pools upon the sills. The girls continued to laugh and chatter. Presently he dozed.

AN ALPINE VILLAGE

BY ANNE GOODWIN WINSLOW

THEIR world stands all on end; no place at all
Is left for even the little fields to lie
That they have hung aloft like tapestry
Upon the granite reaches of the wall
That towers round them. There they cling and crawl
And still contrive between the earth and sky
To reap the fruit of their brief industry
Before the snows and the swift silence fall.

Then in the church the meager women pray,
And in the huts the patient cattle sleep,
And earth the vow of her white peace fulfills,
And heeds them not who with such passion pay
Into her icy breast the faith they keep
And still lift up their eyes unto those hills.

CIRCUS FOLKS ARE FOLKS

BY SARAH COMSTOCK

DURING the long years that I have known the circus—have enjoyed a confidential chat with the Strong Lady, have discussed cross-stitch with the Supreme Equestrienne, or have dished up gossip with flying families—I have often wondered vaguely just what the lure might be. For it isn't the lure of spangles and tinsels and gaudy electric glares, or of Breathlessly Hair-Raising, Spectacularly Sensational, and Unparalleled Feats of Daring Never Before Attempted. Spangles and Spectacular Sensations alike tarnish with the years and the glitter is no more.

No, it isn't any of these obvious enthrallments. I am not agreeably stunned or paralyzed or petrified by the performance. Rather, it is the performers themselves who hold me chained by an affection that age cannot wither. It is the circus people as they are, beyond the spotlight, minus the rouge and tinsel—homely sometimes, and often middle-aged and out of curl, and not especially heroic—it is they themselves that call forth the *neighbor* in me.

For this being exists in each one of us, I firmly believe, tucked away in a secret place perhaps, but still responding to the chord. Those of us who dwell in the rigorous climate of the great city's apartment life, where it would be a breach of etiquette to know the next-door family's name, can yet warm (give us a chance) to the spirit of the village street. And having meandered thus far along my path of analysis, I bring up at the fact that few things more warmly call forth that hidden *neighbor* in me than to enter the great dressing-tent of the circus women, to see a hand waving from one corner, to hear a "Hel-lo!" ring from another, to have a contortionist's baby goo-goo at me, to meet a smile here, a bit of bursting news there as I pass along the aisle of trunks.

"Look at my sofa pillow! The Sword-Swallowing Girl showed me that stitch, and I'm going to embroider this for home next winter," announces an aërialist.

"Oh, I've got a new recipe for spiced peach marmalade, and if we get back before the peaches are all gone, I'm going to put up three dozen jars," declares a bareback rider.

It all comes to this. I love these people, not because they raise my hair but because they warm my heart. I love them not because they are performers of intrepid feats, but because they are human beings who like home, husband, wife, children, family cat, baked beans, darning bag, "The Suwanee River," and homemade piccalilli. They are not theatrical, they are not *poseurs;* they leave florid adjectives to the press agent and speak commonplace Americanese; they don't for a moment think of themselves as Unrivalled Marvels of Dauntless Heroism, but as Jennie's husband or Bill's wife or the father or mother of freckle-nosed Dicky. They don't, during the half-year off the road, live in an atmosphere of glittering splendor, but of simple home comfort—the sort of comfort where a husband gets into his shirt sleeves and takes the clock to pieces because *he* knows how and that confounded clock tinker down the street doesn't understand his business; where a wife dons her checked apron and makes the waffles herself because Jim always did like her waffles better than any others. Is there any reason why a clown should not take the family clock to pieces or why

an acrobat should not perform somersaults with the waffle iron? For the simple but seldom realized truth is that circus folks are folks.

It's a curious little world, entirely sufficient unto itself, this world of the circus actors. It is walled about and seldom approached by outsiders. From generation to generation passes the art of bareback riding or animal training or trapeze flying: "Gran'ma's a grand aërialist, her ring work is only beat by two others, and she's fifty-eight last March." Intermarriage is as much the rule as with royalty, or with a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor; rider marries contortionist, juggler marries acrobat, bear trainer marries high-wire dancer. So, closely bound, unknown to the outside world and indifferent to it, these people go their own way; and it's a happy, wholesome, sane, homely, folksy way. The other day I asked a trapeze performer if she wanted her seven-year-old son to follow in her own and her husband's footflights.

She shook herself out of the green-and-gold trunks and ostrich feathers of Mlle. Adèle, stepped into a cotton kimono, and became Mrs. Muldoon.

"Well, he'd have a grander time outside the circus," she reflected. "S'ciety, and a chance to go to shows and dine at restaurants. He could lay around."

In circus parlance, be it known, those of us who do not fly through the air for a living, or daily turn fifty flipflaps in succession, are condemned to the outer darkness of sloth as "the people that lay around."

Maternity brooded in Dellie Muldoon's eyes as she kicked off the slop-shoes. "Of course, I'd like him to have the grandest time he can," she went on thoughtfully, "but I'll feel safer about him if I know he's growing up with the show. One boy left us, got into one of those swell sets—my, it was terrible—nearly broke his mother's heart. He went to the dogs till she lost her nerve and fell one day when there wasn't any net. Yes, for health *and* morals, the one sure place is the circus every time."

Mrs. Muldoon had summed up the attitude of these few hundred people toward the rest of the world. We are the idlers of the earth. We stroll through a life of pleasure-seeking leisure, we "lay around" while they toil by the sweat of their brows and at the risk of their necks for our capricious pleasure. We are a good enough sort, but we don't grasp the fact that life is real, life is earnest—a trapeze is not our goal. Many of us may be virtuous, but in our midst vice exists, and to permit a young person to mingle with the world of outsiders is to run a risk. Acquaintance with that world beyond the wall is discouraged; boys are kept busy at their training, girls are held under a grim duenna system.

The six acrobatic Hoppe maidens turned to Prunellas at my query:

"What happens when unknown young men write you notes and send you candy?"

They pursed twelve rosy young lips and folded twelve hands primly in the laps of their sky-blue tights.

"We always give them to Momma right away," replied the spokesman of the six. "Three of us are too young to have anything to do with gentlemen. And we three older ones only know those that are properly introduced. Momma reads the letters first, and if they're very respectful, just that they admire our work, then she lets us write and thank them for their kind appreciation. But if they are one speck sentimental—"

"There!" broke in Momma dramatically, and pointed with a direly significant finger to the wastebasket.

The Hoppes are as perfect an example of the old-time circus family as remains with us to-day. Both grandparents on both sides were acrobats, even as the third generation is now. Poppa Hoppe has trained his flock from the cradle up; their first word is said to have been "flip-flap" and their first step to have been taken on their hands. Momma Hoppe, meanwhile, has clucked like a tiny so-

Drawn by George Wright

I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED VAGUELY JUST WHAT THE LURE MIGHT BE

licitous hen from the arrival of the first chick, twenty-four years ago, until now that she is followed by six strapping daughters and one son of ten—"all born in Michigan except Arabella, and she was born on the train. I says, 'Poppa,' says I, 'I think I'd better stay in the Pullman and you go and see if somebody won't come from one of those houses over there.'"

The circus woman's manner of meeting this problem is disheartening to those earnest reformers who strive to convince us that legal measures must be taken to give every woman leisure during her period of contributing to the census. The tent performer simply laughs to scorn the idea that it is any problem at all. She "takes a little time off" and promptly "feels fine again." This wiry, wee Mrs. Hoppe, whose daughters stand inches above her and outweigh her by many pounds—powerful as boy athletes, blooming as a dairymaids' chorus—observes, "I never stop up to two or three weeks before—that's always been aplenty for me. Those that lay around have time to feel bad. I feel better when I go right back to my flipflaps."

TRAINED FROM THE CRADLE UP

It is with the same simple courage that the circus woman meets sickness, pain, or grief wherever she happens to find it. No elaborate systems of mental science, autosuggestion, or Couéism help her to it; she merely takes the knocks as they come, in the arena or out, as all in the day's work. She is totally devoid of the vanity in ill health that leads so many of her sex to select embroidered negligées for future headaches and to date all history from "my operation." She will show all the sympathy in the world toward others in trouble, but she has none for herself. I remember coming upon a little aërialist lying curled like a sick kitten on her trunk. A rider, pink tighted and crystal decked, was laying compresses on her head.

"I've got to go now, Honey—that's my call," the rider said, clapping a golden wig over shorn gray hair. "The other girls'll help you in the trapeze. Think you can stick it out?"

"*I'll* say it," came faint but firm from the heap on the trunk.

Twenty minutes later the sick kitten pulled herself together and went on. I saw the performance.

"Heavens! You've beaten your own record!" I cried as she staggered back to the dressing-tent. "You must have made at least five extra twirls!"

"I'll show myself I don't lay around if I *am* sick!" she declared stubbornly, and unpretentiously fainted into a Wild West rider's arms. The show, departing that night, left her in a hospital with pneumonia.

And, of course, letters and gifts showered on her up to the day when she swam airily back up into her familiar heights of the Big Top. For these people are knit together in a

A LITTLE AERIALIST LAY CURLED LIKE A SICK KITTEN ON HER TRUNK

freemasonry which neither years nor miles can break. Once with the show means forever with it in heart. The other day as the tents were going up in New Jersey a throng was collected in the midst of swaying elephant trunks, arriving performers, bustling managers, woofing tigers, incoming baggage, peevish midgets carrying their own suitcases, and thumping red vans. I found that the center of the throng was a little old lady, spectacled, snowy, tremulous with delight—her hand being shaken almost to politicians' cramp while she beamed up at everybody from ringmaster to cook.

"It's Mrs. Black!" everybody was crying, and more came running to welcome her. They pelted her with news.

"Remember the Lion-Faced Boy? He's back this year. You used to make him lemonade in hot weather, he complained so of being shaggy in the heat."

"The Noonans? Yes, they're with us again. Mrs. Noonan tried settling down but she says people are so cranky outside the show. She kept her lion cubs in the apartment and the landlord objected, though she always shut them into the bathroom when he called."

"This is my baby—you wouldn't believe it, would you?" triumphed a pretty gymnast, swinging to her shoulder a lusty cherub of three as you or I might

handle a bean-bag. The old lady made charming overtures to the cherub, but he remained unresponsive, being preoccupied with a grievance.

"Want my all-day-sucker! Pin Head's got it!" he wailed.

"One of the Pin Heads grabbed his candy," explained his mother apologetically. "There, there, Buddy—he didn't mean anything more'n an elephant when he grabs a peanut. Those Pin Heads—nobody home," she concluded in grave aside to me.

And all this outpour of welcoming news was by way of proving to a little old lady that because she had been thirty-five years with the circus she would always belong to its innermost circle, even though the infirmities of age have brought her to a life of church sewing societies and pie-baking in Newark, New Jersey. "In 1872 Mr. Barnum made me wardrobe mistress," she preens herself, and the very tone in which she utters it carves the name's niche in the Hall of Fame.

The wardrobe mistress is far more than a mere needle and thread. She is guide, philosopher, and friend-in-general of the women's tent. She clk-clks to their babies while they are performing, bathes their sprains when they come off damaged, comforts them when home letters do not arrive, chaperons them through their love affairs, and stands patroness to their social gatherings.

SHE BATHES THEIR SPRAINS AND COMFORTS THEM

These are many and exclusive. Every season is gayly littered with them, but rarely does anyone outside this happy family enter in. The woman's dressing-tent hums with the buzz of teas and cards; sometimes the girls give a vaudeville and invite the men; and the coffee clubs, bridge clubs, sewing clubs, and reading clubs would warrant a Federation of their own. Inquiry concerning one of the last named led to the information that it had devoted one summer to a thorough study of the works of Harold Bell Wright, Gene Stratton Porter, and Thomas Carlyle.

The prime social event is a wedding, but this seldom occurs on the road, although romance flourishes like a green bay tree. A gymnast may fall in

love with the poodle trainer, carry chocolates to her Pullman section, and take her riding on Sundays; but the wedding is usually put off until the season is over, "so's not to interrupt."

"A fine crop we had last spring," the wardrobe mistress tells me. "Six weddings before we started on the road. And every one inside the show, as it ought to be. Twelve of our finest. A great crop."

The winged god now and then gets ahead of practical considerations. One young aërialist lost his heart to the pretty Cinderella who rode beside him in "The Spec," and slipped off and married her on the sly because she was so vigilantly chaperoned that it was his only chance. The elopement turned out the event of the season. Parents forgave, clowns had a special performance in its honor, the band gave a private concert, teas and card parties and dinners overwhelmed the couple.

HE LOST HIS HEART TO THE PRETTY CINDERELLA

But for all the good fellowship, social boundaries are kindly but firmly drawn; the Freaks do not mingle with "The Big Show." An attitude of gentle and sympathetic patronage exists, and there the relations stop. But these whom nature has singled out for fame by forms not of their own choosing make a merry group of themselves. One summer Sunday I came upon them in a grove; for a dazed moment I pinched myself to determine whether I was Sarah Comstock or Alice in Wonderland. For the woodland was a-chirp with the chatter of midgets, bearded ladies, giants and giantesses, missing links, fat ladies, The Homeliest Woman, and indescribable others.

"We're having a picnic!" this fantastic company cried. From the groaning board a midget seized a plate of sandwiches, gallantly passing it to Positively the Most Superlative Giantess of the Age and Universe.

"Say, Thumby, send it up on the dumbwaiter, won't you?" she bantered with bovine playfulness.

"Aw, get a parachute and come down after it!" he retorted.

The repartee may not have been subtle but it was significant. It evidenced what I have found to be true: that for the most part the Freaks do not suffer from the sensitiveness which our sensitiveness attributes to them. With rare exceptions, they accept the stares of the public with an easy stoicism: "We can make more money this way." The show is their drudgery; when it is over they,

with the other side-show performers, turn to their picnics, sewing bees, and gossip. The Sword-Swallowing Girl studies dancing; the Fat Midgetess snatches every opportunity to do a cosy bit of chafing-dish cookery, though complaining that "kitchen shelves and tables are made so stupidly high"; the Snake Charmer revels in her birds, cats, and dogs when at home, "being fond of *all* pretty pets"; and the Tattooed Girl's greatest thrill is found in seeing Norma Talmadge in "a *real* drammer."

The strongest reaction that these people have left with me is a shame at my own early squeamishness. I began with a shudder; I ended by forgetting all except that a grotesquely fat and short woman likes to put on an apron and make a Welsh rarebit because she *is* a woman; that a hopelessly crippled girl crochets exquisite lace because the creative longing is at work in her as it is in you and me . . . that even freaks are folks.

"I CAN DO A CHICKEN WITH MUSHROOMS NOW AND THEN"

Domesticity being the keynote of the circus performers' life, they enjoy a portable domesticity even on the road. No sooner are the car sections and staterooms assigned for the season than up go the curtains which each woman has made for herself. Magazines, photographs, cushions, flowers turn every Pullman section into a miniature home. Mrs. Barna, the rider, confesses in a whisper that "it isn't allowed, but I *have* to carry a little stove in our stateroom so that I can do a chicken with mushrooms now and then for my husband: he gets so homesick if I don't."

The two fundamental arts of womankind are at the finger tips of every one. Not one but is adept with the needle and the kitchen spoon. Their free hours are divided between the Pullmans in which they sleep, the dining-tent served like an army mess, and the dressing-tent; in the latter eighty-eight women have summered together without one quarrel, which is their boast, and should bring a blush to the cheek of every church sewing society in the country. Here they gather to sew for their babies; to discuss "how hard bears and tigers are on your clothes"; and to repair the arena's daily wreckage of torn ruffles and spilled spangles.

Sunday finds some of them attending church; they usually belong to the Y. W. C. A., and I know some acrobats who always doff lavender tights to teach Sunday School when they reach their home town. But one Darby and Joan couple may be caught of a Sabbath morning slipping off from the Pullman like children at hooky to seek the nearest stream; in their dingy old fishing garb you would never guess them to be the Beau Brummel master of the ring and his devoted spouse, the glittering queen of equestriennes.

A quiet home in the country is the circus performers' dream. Some of them

are kept busy through the winter in vaudeville; even so, there's a farm or a small-town house somewhere awaiting them. Their art must be sandwiched in between such domestic acts as shaking down the furnace or seasoning the pot-roast; it won't do to get out of practice, therefore the rider lays out a ring in his backyard and the acrobatic parents build a concrete gymnasium under their house and drill the children there after school.

"I don't believe in being hard on 'em," Poppa declares. "I don't punish 'em when they don't make thirty flipflaps. I says, 'Dicky, what do you want most? I'll give it to you when you get those backward revolutions down fine.' He's only ten, but he says, 'A typewriter.' And now he's got it, and he's written a letter on it to a Senator, and he's got an answer, too."

NOT ONE BUT IS ADEPT WITH THE NEEDLE

Parenthood is proud among these people, but it is wholesomely rigorous as well. A substantial respect for the three R's prevails; some children are left with relatives to attend school, others travel with the show, but even here their mental sprouting is not neglected. Although you may never have heard the Ringling brothers named with Doctors Eliot, Finley, or Butler among the nation's educators, it is nevertheless true that they have maintained a traveling school.

Manners and morals, too, are given strict attention. A little acrobat came from school in her home town crying bitterly:

"The gym teacher don't like me any more."

"Now what did you do?" began the maternal investigation.

"I didn't do noth—anything. I did everything she told us in class, even if it *was* baby work, but while we were waiting I thought I'd put in a little practice, and one of the girls had to yell, 'Look at Ada, she's walking on her hands!' Then another one said, 'Teacher, can you walk on your hands? 'Course you can, being a gym teacher.' And the teacher got just as red, she was so mad, and she said, 'Well, anyhow, I can stand on my head!' And she hasn't spoken to me since."

"Serves you right," came the prompt reproof. "How many times have I told you girls never to show you was superior?"

No—it is not all bliss unalloyed to be a circus child. This was brought home to me when entering a rear gate that led to the showgrounds. Outside, peering in, stood a youth of four or five; inside, peering out, another. Suddenly as these two gazed at each other, grief seized them simultaneously; each on his own side of the fence burst into a howl.

The mother of the one outside, gathered hers up. "There, never mind! He wants to go in and see the elephants and giraffes and things."

The mother of the one inside, ditto. "There, don't cry, don't cry! He's sick of the show—he's the circus kid. He

PAUSING WITH A COMICAL GESTURE, HE SEIZED HER HAND AND WAVED IT

wants to go see the Aquarium he's heard about, and the toy stores, and all the nice things outside."

But in spite of occasional human yearnings, the "circus kid" will cling to his own from birth to death. He will grow up, love and marry, and some day die within it.

There is a story of a bareback rider who was thrown one day by a humping horse. She lay still where she fell.

Her husband, a clown, ran and picked her up, flung her over his shoulder like a sack of meal, and made a grimace to the audience as he ran off with her. Pausing once, with a comical gesture, he seized her hand and waved it. The audience roared applause for what they took to be a rehearsed finale.

"Out back" he collapsed. But, "She was always bent on making a artistic exit. 'Leave the arena artistic,' that was her hobby. An' I was bound she should do it even then. It's the way she'd want it."

He said it over and over all that day, and all the next day—"It was the way she'd want it"—even when, in a Middle West drizzle, the line of black hacks drove to the cemetery. Other clowns and a great rider and even one of the circus owners were the pallbearers. Thus do these people live with, work with, play with, and bury their own.

So it's with a sort of homely idealism that they meet the common human experiences—love, marriage, friendship, birth, parenthood, suffering, death. They are simple, they are stalwart, they are affectionate, they are folksy. I never bid them good-by without a pang. A vacant lot, dismal disorder of tanbark, chewing-gum wrappers, dead toy balloons, a train pulling out, waving hands—and the last yapping of poodles fades, the voice of elephant and tiger die in the rumbling distance.

"I'm putting up my mustard pickles as usual in my stateroom. Cucumbers are exactly right in September," the queen of equestriennes said to me as she bade me good-by. She had just come from the ring.

"My husband gets so homesick without my cooking," she added, smiling at the ringmaster as he bent, after a quarter-century of married life, to kiss his wife in her apron.

Oh, the band may blare, pachyderms may astound, jovial joeys may caper, and unparalleled feats may dazzle. But to me the charm and the meaning lie in the whiff of those mustard pickles and all that they stand for.

THE DARK

TO BE READ TO A CHILD

BY LAURA SPENCER PORTOR

I SEE the first star shine,
Delicate, fine;
I hear a watch dog bark!
Hush! the sedges sway, and bow, tender and low!
They know! They know!
Hush! Hush! Noiseless, noiseless, here comes the Dark!
The Blessed Dark

And all her garments woven are of dreams,
And her white feet are silver on the streams.
Gentler than any breeze,
Tall, dutiful,
And, oh, most beautiful,
She brings star splendor and heart's ease
In either hand. And as she comes she sings
Songs that no mortal ear
But birds only hear,
With their fluffed heads beneath their sleepy wings.

What would you? For she brings
The heart's most dear desire.
Thyme, and rosemary, and sweet-smelling spice,
Sandal, and cinnamon, and most magical odors out of Paradise.
Ivory and peacocks from Samarkand;
O'er sapphire sea and topaz land
She brings. From Sheraphan
In Turkestan,
Ivory and pomegranates, amethyst, tourmaline,
And smoldering opals such as never yet were seen,
Save only of the boy Alla'ad dhin,
Stuffing his deep pockets full of gems,
The size of plums and apples, from the stems
Of trees in subterranean gardens marvelous;
All these, all these, and more she brings to us.

Oh, she has a store of riches that no spending can exhaust;
She has a key to kingdoms that can never more be lost;
She has in her cool fingers joys that no one else can bring,
And the mere hem of her garment is surcease of sorrowing.
The Dark, the blessed Dark!
Hark!
I hear a watch dog bark!
Hush! the sedges bend low, low!
They know! They know!
Noiseless, here comes the Dark—
The Blessed Dark!

THE BIBLE AND COMMON SENSE

2. *The Inspiration of the Bible*

BY BASIL KING

IF the Bible is the record of man's progress in the knowledge of God, it is essential to understand some at least of the processes by which it has reached its position of authority. Where so much is claimed the credentials become the more important; and though it is impossible to deal exhaustively with so large a subject in so limited a space, some lines of suggestion may be sketched.

There were years during which the subject of the inspiration of the Bible was to me personally a puzzle. In what I had been taught as to God's taking possession of the minds and pens of certain individuals to produce work which would guide the world into absolute truth, I could see little or no reason. The process seemed so oddly indirect, so woefully roundabout. If He was doing this at all, why should He not have made the result more lucid? Why should He have strewn His course with traps and snares and stumbling-blocks? The Holy Ghost which has endued Moses or David or Paul with an authority different in essence from that of all but their colleagues in producing Holy Writ could as easily as not have made the issue so clear that there would have been no wrangling. A series of divinely dictated books, which perplexed the world almost as much as they helped it struck me as perhaps the strangest of all the strange phenomena which religion placed before us.

And yet I held fast to the inspiration. The more I read of the Bible the more sure of it I felt. Bewilderment remained, shaking this conviction but never quite destroying it. It was only with the passage and the thought of years that I was able to get the subject on the rocklike basis of what to me seems common sense.

I beg to repeat here that what I have to say in this, and all other respects, stands for no more than a personal point of view. I am not arguing or trying to convince. If in what follows I seem to speak in that way, it is only for the sake of conciseness. With no desire to convert anyone, I give my views because I have been asked, and only for what they are worth. If they are wrong they are wrong. If on the other hand there is anything in them which a single reader finds helpful, it will be that much to the good.

I have already acknowledged my debt to the Anglican, Evangelical, Christian Science, and Roman Catholic Churches, and wish to acknowledge it again. I speak as one who, in many of their aspects, reverences them all, and yet is outside them all. Outside them all, with some mental perspective between me and them, I am able, it seems to me, to accept more easily what I can accept from them, while what I must put aside disturbs me less. Bringing perspective into play, I am able to see them all as essentially one, with only minor differences between them. They impress me as a great family, with the same ruling traits, the same virtues, the same weaknesses, the same mutual hostilities and loyalties which families develop, with the same verbal bickerings, bitter among themselves, but affecting the outsider only indirectly. Owing them much, and admiring them

all, it is from their united opinions, as I get them, that I distill for myself an idea of the Bible which possibly no one of them would countenance.

Beginning with the human race before it has appeared above the horizon of written history, the Bible shows us first an elemental people with an elemental concept of the Divine. Nevertheless, certain principles have been evolved. Between Good and Evil the distinction has been made. Conscience has begun to work. Adam, the Man, and Eve, the Mother—those two fundamental types—having eaten of the Tree to be Desired to Make One Wise, have passed the stage of the innocence which is ignorance. The Garden of Childhood is behind them. Responsibilities have been incurred. The burdens of life must be shouldered. Its problems must be solved. In the opening pages of Genesis the human race has been started on that long upward climb of which we in the twentieth century have probably not attained halfway.

It is not, I take it, the object of the Bible to reflect the whole of that long struggle to the top, but only the part of it in which man works up from his primitive notions of God to the concept of the Universal Father. By reaching the concept of the Universal Father, I do not assume that he discerns all the fullness of God, but only the degree of that fullness which, in our present stage of development, we are able to assimilate. In proportion to God's Infinity, that must be little; in proportion to our own powers, it is much. The Bible begins with a God who is manlike, partial, incomplete; it ends with a Vision of Infinity, Intelligence, and Love beyond any description or definition possible to thought or words. Having reached this point, it stops. It has given us all of which as yet we can make use.

But whence came its authority to give us anything? How is it that a collection of books, some of which draw from prehistoric data, some of which were penned perhaps three thousand years ago, all of which belong to epochs and conditions alien to our own, can have obtained such a hold on that portion of mankind supposed with reason to be the most materially minded? At the moment of writing I read in the newspapers that the presses which print the Bible cannot keep pace with the demand. How did this demand arise? What maintains it? Why do people buy and read this ancient book, when they can buy and read so much that is newer, fresher, and, on the surface at least, more directly suited to their twentieth-century needs?

Of one thing we can be certain, that unless these books supplied something which the heart of Europe and America craves for its sustenance, no such demand would continue. Nowhere else in history, to my knowledge, do we find a group of peoples, extremely diverse among themselves, appropriating a whole literature not their own, which they had no part in producing, and living on it as they never live on the most vital works of their own children.

The phenomenon calls attention to itself, and is perhaps its own best explanation.

Demand is always in proportion to the quality of the supply. That is all. There is no further mystery. It is with the Bible as with everything else. Where there is that which meets a need, those who feel the need will turn to it. No factitious sentiment would keep the printing presses of the Bible working overtime. No pietistic or sectarian or ecclesiastical incitement could, year in and year out, support a sale which possibly equals that of all the rest of the books in the world put together. Life does not work that way. Nothing is continually and eagerly bought and paid for which is not worth its price to the purchasers. Deception or overestimation may rule for a time, but it is discovered in the long run. If in the

long run the demand for any article is greater than it ever was, we may depend upon it that there is value in that article which is not to be found elsewhere.

There, then, is the basic reason for the Bible's authority: its value. Make all the allowances you like for the unread Bibles on the shelves of homes, schools, and churches, and there still must remain a vast number of people in the world studying these books and finding in them truths essential to their welfare. It is they who primarily give to this volume its right to speak. It is they who have primarily given the Bible its power ever since the days when the first of these spiritual classics was singled out as having a special quality.

The fact should be recognized that this was not done by some magic stroke outside the methods of nature, or by a mysterious divine influence differing from everything else we know. This is to cheapen the Bible and divine influence alike. The master-works of Hebrew literature took their place in public esteem by exactly the same process as those of any other literature. It was a matter of general acclaim, similar to that which gave Shakespeare his rank among English writers, or Dante his among Italians, or Emerson his among Americans. Led doubtless by the cultured and critical—as culture and criticism were understood—the mass of the people came to know that such and such a work had a significance of its own, and it was placed apart.

Let us put ourselves back in the days before any portion of our existing Bible had been compiled or composed. It was already, as recent discoveries in Egypt have shown us even more vividly than we knew before, a period of high cultivation. Among the Hebrews the ancient Babylonian wedge-shaped script, suitable for use on hard materials but not elastic in expression, had been superseded by a Hebrew alphabet nearly as graphic as our own. The clay tablet and the stone stele had been replaced by parchment or some form of paper made from the Egyptian papyrus. Manuscripts were not common, but they existed. Where they existed they were held and housed in honor. Scholars were familiar with their contents. At times they were read aloud to audiences, as lectures are among ourselves. There was an interested public. It was a public so well informed as to the substance of their literature that a reference was all they required. In the historical books of the Old Testament, where some of a king's most significant acts have been given, we come repeatedly on a formula like this: "Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?" Or again: "Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and what he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?" That is to say, for a people who knew so well such books as they possessed, a mere *videlicet* was enough.

Equally well, doubtless, they knew their other books, of which fragments at most have survived into our time. The Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah mentioned above were not the First and Second Books of Chronicles of our present Old Testament. There were these histories now lost to us; there were others. There was the Book of Jasher; the Book of Gad; the Book of Nathan; the Book of Shemaiah; the Book of Iddo the Seer; the Book of the Wars of the Lord. There were others still. Some were earlier than any of the books of our Bible; some were written while the Bible was in course of formation. My point is simply that there was a literature more or less known and enjoyed by the public to whom it was addressed.

To this public, then, came the first of the books we now hold as sacred. Many critics think it was the Book of Job. For our present purpose the particular work is unimportant, and the

Book of Job will serve as well as any other. The fact to bear in mind is that to those who first read it, or heard it read aloud, it was not a more sacred book than books already familiar. There was no one to say, "This will be the nucleus of our Bible." There was no thought in any mind that thousands of years later, in continents called Europe and America, millions of readers would pore over that book, and mark it with hundreds of millions of annotations. It was just one more book where there were already a good many. It is probable that the class to which the Book of Job belongs, the dramatic poem, was fairly well represented. The author had possibly written other books. Great masterpieces do not, as a rule, spring all alone. That the Book of Job is the sole survivor of its type and time means no more than the solitary column which marks the site where once there was a city.

But some power was at work to keep this book a living thing when other books, which at first seemed equally vital, passed out of mind. The same power acted on behalf of another book, and of another, and of another still. What was it? To all intents and purposes it was the power of instinctive, popular critical acumen. I call it instinctive for the reason that, even with regard to the works of the present day, we have never learned how and why it acts. I call it popular because its decisions come somehow from the heart of a whole people. It is not only among the Hebrews that we have seen it at work, but among all the nations with vitality enough to produce a literature.

By this spirit of critical acumen, in the course of centuries, a selection of works was set aside as classical. As time went on the number of these works increased. As readers drew from their wisdom a more and more energizing strength, veneration for them became still more deeply rooted. But it must not be forgotten that the action was that which has singled out merit at all times, the use of a sound judgment on the part of the intelligent. In other words, the Hebrew classics were marked as classics in the same way as the Greek or the English. The values by which they were appraised were different, but the method was the same. The Bible would probably gain much in living, practical use to us if we could view it free from the artificial or superstitious slants which the teachers of our childhood, for the most part unauthorized and uninformed, have taught us to assume.

Otherwise expressed, Hebrew literature commends itself to the world by its own inherent value, and not because it is forced on our attention by the decrees of Jewish or Christian Councils. Jewish and Christian Councils have indorsed it, but they indorsed it long after the choice of works had, in the main, been made. Gold has its value as gold, not because the mint puts a stamp on it. The stamp of the mint means something; but it would mean nothing were the real gold not there. Wisdom, then, gives its authority to the Bible, not the image and superscription put on it by any body of men whatever. All that a body of men could have undertaken was to define, delimit, corroborate, and accept what had been done centuries before by the instinctive, popular critical acumen.

This is not said to minimize the authority of Jewish or Christian Councils, but to give their due meed of credit to the Scriptures themselves. To those who find what they have to give, they are their own best introduction. Were this not so, the books which run from Genesis to the Apocalypse would never have stood out above those of Nathan or Gad or Iddo the Seer. The preeminence is natural, spontaneous, like that of the Alps or the Canadian Rockies above the surrounding valleys and plains. Where the spirit of man is passionate in searching after God it will, of course, reach a higher and more

glowing point than where it is less intense. The high points are those which the Bible reveals to us. They are sometimes obscured by what may seem to us irrelevant matter; but in the end they will make themselves visible, as the Schreckhorn and the Jungfrau will show their white peaks over seas of cloud.

What then becomes of the mysterious force we call inspiration?

We shall see that better if we know what we mean by the word. It is a word that has been used so vaguely, so inexactly—I will even say, so corruptly—that a simple matter has been made to appear difficult.

Moreover, and the fact cannot be stressed too strongly, a tradition acquired "at mother's knee" has so woven itself around the phrase "verbal inspiration" that much passes current as Christian belief which Christians have never dogmatically taught. Lack of space forbids me to dwell on these assumptions, but we cannot forget that they are made. We can perhaps meet them best by finding the basic co-operation through which God becomes the dynamic energy not only of the universe at large but of the rightly directed works of man.

Briefly it is this: God is man's working power. Our works are more inspired in proportion as they keep close to God; they are less inspired in proportion as they tend away from Him. In complete departure from God, if that were possible, there would be no inspiration at all. In complete surrender to Him, as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, the inspiration would be full.

It is necessary to point out here that this inspiration must be available for all our undertakings. To see God as infusing Himself into one part of our legitimate life, and not infusing Himself into another part, is to bring inconsistency into the Universal. To speak of Him as giving more inspiration here, and less inspiration there, is to ascribe to Him an element of caprice. It is, in fact, to make Him in large measure the cause of our failures and defects. If He helps us to be right at one time, and does not help us at another, the responsibility for our going wrong must, at least to some extent, be His. If by an extraordinary use of His Holy Spirit He compels Matthew and Mark to write good books, and refuses this Spirit to me, when He could so easily breathe it into me, then He is to blame for my inefficiency. A spasmodic inspiration would surely become the cause of our merely spasmodic successes.

In all that we do that is right Omnipresent Energy must, from its very nature, be backing us to the last possible degree. There is not more inspiration for this task, and less inspiration for that; there must be full inspiration for every task. To ourselves some tasks may seem more important than others. To Him who sees the end which all things serve all that is right must be equally significant and essential.

Our initial confusion as to inspiration springs from the idea that God is more concerned with some of our occupations than He is with others, and that for some of them He gives us extra help, while He leaves others to take care of themselves. In this way we speak of a poet as inspired to write a song, but not of a carpenter to build a house. We speak of a bishop as being inspired to preach a sermon, but not of a banker to extend a loan. We speak of the Church as inspired to teach the truth, but not of the Government to put it into action. It is easy enough to think of the Holy Ghost being present when the Book of Ruth was composed, or the Gospel according to St. John, but not when Mr. Edison invented the electric light or Madame Curie discovered radium. God, for perhaps most of us, is a Being interested in churches, in services, in philanthropies, and all compositions to which we would append the word sacred, but not in business, or science, or railways, or coal mining, or any but the

most idealistic forms of art. From the part of our life with which we ourselves are most anxiously preoccupied, we shut out His inspiration.

To no small extent it is a matter of verbal expression. With the phraseology of our understanding we use our words backward. We say that God's inspiration goes more into this than into that when we mean that this more than that utilizes God's inspiration. God's inspiration must be universal, since God Himself is universal. It is for all to breathe in like the air. It is for all right tasks, for all useful purposes. If the poet gets more of it than the carpenter, it is because he is mentally keeping closer to the source of it. If the bishop gets more of it than the banker, it is because he is more consciously depending upon it. If the Church gets more of it than the State, it is because it expects to receive it. But all receive it to some degree, even when they do not expect it, or depend upon it consciously. God being the working energy of man, His force may be wasted, abused, or misapplied, but never lost entirely.

The Bible, therefore, is not only inspired as all other honest work is inspired, but in the same way. If it reveals a higher measure of inspiration than any other work, it is not because it was given it, but because it has reached it. The powers its writers displayed in reaching it caused their books to be singled out. Gad, or Shemiah, or Iddo the Seer might have reached it too, but they fell short. Relatively, we all fall short: our artists, our scientists, our preachers, our priests, and our saints. Up to the present the writers whose works compose our Bible have grasped the universal inspiration to a point at which they have no rivals. They are our inspired writers *par excellence*, through the greatness of their achievement.

It will be noted that the fact that God did nothing for them which He does not do for all of us by no means detracts from His honor or from theirs. On the contrary, it seems to me to add to that of both. There is something puerile in ascribing to God special efforts in this direction or in that. If He is going to make special efforts at all, we might reasonably expect Him to make them oftener and with more efficiency. He might ward off from us sicknesses, disasters, calamities, wars. The fact that, even when besieged by prayer, He refuses so to do has often made Him seem to the heartbroken an unreasonable, futile God, not worth believing in. Granting the existence of a God who can make special efforts if He likes, and yet will not make them, one cannot refuse some sympathy to the indignation that denounces Him. On the other hand, a God who always gives all to all, and who gives to all—differently, doubtless, and yet without injustice or inequality—is so easy to understand that the heart goes out to Him spontaneously.

Inspiration, then, being full and free, not only for the purposes of the Scriptures, but for all other purposes as well, what particular end is it meant to serve?

As far as the Bible is concerned we might say in a general way that it serves as a guide to truth. Truth is one of the Bible's main objectives. By this I mean that, whatever the stages of development of the people whom it portrays, whether more primitive or more advanced, it shows them as at all times struggling after truth. To put up this struggle is this people's ruling instinct. Where the Greek's ruling instinct may loosely be said to be for Beauty, and the Roman's for Law, the Hebrew's is for the working out of Truth as the medium of life.

Not that they were always conscious of this aim, or that, as a life-motive, it was constant. Rather it was a blind impulse, often erroneously followed, often perverted or forsaken. Often, too, they rejected Truth after it had been made known to them. The pages of the Bible teem with their misconceptions,

their abjurations, their distortions, denials, and apostasies. And yet in the end the movement was forward. Just as among ourselves progress maintains itself in spite of crises in which all that is best seems threatened with collapse, so among them there was the ebb and flow of effort which always carried the advance a little farther.

Like the longing for God Himself, this longing for Truth, in spite of recessions and betrayals, worked up and up till it found its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. Truth was what He came to exemplify. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." This purpose might be said to underlie all His other purposes. It might be said to infuse and mold and direct them. He not only knew the Truth, He lived it—He made it manifest in action. It is what gives breadth and height to His mission. In it lies, I think, the secret of the charm which draws all men unto Him. With this life as its crowning point, the Bible has become a compendium of Truth and of truths beyond anything else in our possession.

Here we must recognize and keep in mind some of our own limitations. Truth is doubtless a final Absolute, complete, positive, without variations. Reading of Truth in the Bible, we should be able to see it at a glance. The many specific and separate truths should be self-evident, admitting of no dispute.

And yet, as it is we have a common saying that you can prove anything out of the Bible. The implication is that the meanings you can read into it are so numerous that they lead you nowhere. If they lead you anywhere, it is into confusion. It is a fact that of the three hundred and more Christian sects, each takes its stand by the Bible. Out of the Bible each proves itself right. Through the Bible each is ready to confound all who differ from its views.

When you come to individuals, of whom it is probable that in the last analysis no two, however dogmatic the sect to which they belong, have exactly the same beliefs, the conflict of evidence, always drawn from the Bible, can be classed beneath the heading of the humorous. If you were the proverbial inhabitant of Mars come down to earth to seek an explanation of the Christian Church in terms of its Holy Scriptures, you would be likely to find that no two Anglicans, or two Baptists, or two Presbyterians, or two Roman Catholics, or two Second Adventists would agree in what they would tell you. Each would think that he was interpreting the formulas of his church with a reasonable exactitude, and yet, such is the capacity of the human mind for individuality, that each would really be seeing from his own unique point of view.

The oddest fact of all is that, considered with detachment, each of the three hundred sects, each of the millions of individuals can be more or less justified out of the Bible's pages. If you carefully follow their reasonings, and if you exclude for the moment all other lines of reasoning, you will see how much there is to stablish their convictions. It is this that enables the Anglican, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Congregationalist, the Plymouth Brother, the Roman Catholic, the Quaker, and the Second Adventist each to swear by his own interpretation of the Scriptures, and ban all others as anathema.

Now this incoherence is not on the Bible's part; it is on our own. Truth as expressed in the Scriptures is of vast extent. It is not only stupendous in sum but intricately rich in detail. Sentences of half a dozen words are profound. Profound sentences are scattered as profusely as shells on the seashore. Their complete inter-relation is as yet beyond our grasp. Having no classification for truths as we have for Crustacea, we can only deal with them singly, or at best in little groups. Our view is so narrow that we see Truth only in spots. Each of us sees a few

truths at a time, according to his capacity for spiritual sight. The whole of Truth is like the whole of the universe, an immensity beyond our range. Even the Bible does not present the whole of Truth; but it presents more than any one man, or any one group of men—be it nation, church or federation of the world—can as yet compass or co-ordinate.

A long step in advance will have been taken when one man is able to concede to another the ability to see in the Bible something of Truth that has escaped himself. It will be a longer one still when one church is able to make this concession to another church. Only something of the sort will give us that inter-sectarian charity essential to saving the Christianity of our day, so clumsy and uneconomic as it is, from seeming a wastage and a futility.

But after all, and in the final test, the value of anything whatever is its value to the individual. If one man who needs one thing can find it in the Bible, and another man who needs another thing can find that also there, it is the Bible's wealth that must be apparent, not the boneless disposition we are often inclined to ascribe to it of being all things to all men. It *is* all things to all men, but in the sense of meeting out of its abundance the most diverse spiritual needs. No real seeker after God can turn to it and be disappointed. He may be puzzled; he may be given tough material to deal with; he may find the supply so much greater than his individual demand that by it he is almost overwhelmed; but all types, and all tastes, and all ecclesiastical leanings, and all racial promptings, and all moral states of mind or soul can be satisfied therefrom.

Inspiration acting in the Scriptures as a guide to Truth, it is important to remember the precise kind of Truth the Hebrew was trying to work out. Like everyone else, he had his limitations. He could go no farther than his national gift carried him. There were aspects of Truth, plainly evident to us, which he, in the main, ignored.

In the main he ignored, 1. Historic Truth; 2. Scientific Truth; 3. Truth in the sense of exactitude of statement as to persons and events.

1. Historic Truth was almost unknown to the ancient world, as even to the modern world it is still without its sharpest point of precision. With all our advantages of scholarship and research, the histories of twenty and thirty and fifty years ago are in no small measure obsolete. 'History on the whole is no more than one man's weaving of conflicting stories into a narrative that seems probable. Where strong interests center, as around periods like the Reformation or the French Revolution, or about characters such as Mary Stuart or Napoleon Bonaparte, there are as many versions of the theme as there are historians to handle it.

If variation can be so common with the open archives of the modern world, still more must that condition have obtained where records were so few. As a matter of fact the ancient historian made little pretense at being accurate. Only at times did he possess the information to make him so. Taking the relatively little that he knew, he added what had come to him as hearsay, filling in with what he himself judged as likely to have occurred. He enlarged on events; he composed speeches. To historical exactitude his audience was not sensitive, just as even now, in the twentieth century, no public that genuinely cares for historical exactitude has as yet been born.

2. Still less was it the mission of the Scriptures to give us information on the subjects we class to-day as scientific. By the ancient world, scientific knowledge in our modern sense had not been dreamed of. It was scarcely dreamed of by Europe and America until a hundred years ago. It was, in fact, the coming to birth of a real Physical Science in the middle of the nineteenth century

that directed the Church and the world to the Bible's actual purpose. After the so-called struggle between Science and Religion in the seventies, eighties, and nineties of the last century, the Bible ceased to be a mere handbook of useful knowledge and it became, to an extent that it had never been before, the veritable Word of God.

3. With regard to temporal facts the attitude of the ancient mind was so different from our own as to render it nearly incomprehensible to people like ourselves. One is driven to assume that the faculty of precision had not yet been developed, as it is not developed in young children. The difficulty experienced by young children in discerning between what has happened and what they imagine to have happened is now a recognized condition of early childhood. The credulity of ancient peoples must be part of the same disability. When the mind is undeveloped the boundary line between everyday life and wonderland is easily moved. Strange tales are easily believed. Facts are not hard, concrete, clearly outlined; they are vague, pliable, lending themselves to whatever use a speaker or a writer makes of them. The value of the literal event, with no less and no more, did not attain to general recognition till within the last two or three generations. Though tentatively pointed out by Aristotle, and emphasized in the thirteenth century by Roger Bacon, it was not till the nineteenth century that the child-mind of the race began to be outlived.

It is not a question of truth and falsehood; it is one of the adjustment of the mind to reality. The modern mind is only partially so adjusted; the ancient mind was scarcely adjusted so at all. There are incidents recorded in the Old Testament which would doubtless not have been included had the compilers possessed the critical equipment of the twentieth century. Even so, our grandfathers had no difficulty in accepting them, and the disturbance of simple minds when asked to view such narratives through correct historical perspective is within living memory.

What we can reasonably expect from the Bible is the gradual climbing up to the highest spiritual point of view; and this is what we find. The effort to reach it lies behind myth, legend, tradition, historical artlessness, lyric hymn, and prophecy, waxing stronger as it runs. Inspiration is the force which urges it along.

This inspiration may be briefly expressed as God's co-operation with man's endeavor. It takes man's endeavor at the stage at which it is. If it is credulous it takes it there. If it is naïve it takes it there. If it is struggling up to higher and wider outlooks it takes it there. It is man's best friend for all his efforts, accepting man as he stands. It does not leave him in the lurch because he is not wiser than he is, or, on the other hand, force him on to knowledge which he has not worked out for himself. It is with him in all the ups and downs and backings and fillings of his progress. Unlike much of our own good intention, it is not in a hurry. It gives man his time. Without haste, it is also without rest, content with no lower objective than that *All-Truth* into which the Spirit of Truth will eventually guide us.

BARE SOULS. V: GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

FLAUBERT was born at Rouen in 1821 and died at Croisset near Rouen in 1880. The whole serious purpose of his existence was to interpret life in beautiful words. "My course," he says in 1852, "has never varied, from the time when I asked my nurse what letters to use to make the words of the phrases I invented, up to this evening, when the ink is drying on the erasures in my pages." He might have said the same twenty-five years later. It is true that he did not settle to systematic work very early. His father was a physician, and he himself was bred to the law. But he never liked it and never practiced. He had a moderate but sufficient patrimony, and at twenty-five he set himself to literature as a business—an enormously engrossing, destroying business—and practically never left it.

A YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT OF FLAUBERT

At the same time no one understood better than Flaubert that literature is based on life and cannot exist a moment without it. More than that, he had a natural zest for living, entered into pleasures and pains, both his own and others', with extraordinary keenness and intensity. He could snatch the bloom off a bit of passion and brood on it for years. Words were absorbing, delightful to him: they were his instruments, his tools, full of endless revelation and charm; but back of words were always things—obscure, uncertain, tormenting you, teasing you, holding you, and making you and the words do their bidding.

Before literature got hold of him completely, he went out into the world with an enthusiastic ardor for travel. The Orient fascinated his rich and oriental imagination, and for over a year he wandered through the picturesque East. Such voyaging then meant rough experiences; but this was nothing to Flaubert. He had a superb physique, was a great blond Norman giant, made for mad adventures and robust toil. His nerves were high-strung and sensitive, and when he abused them by reckless disregard of hygiene, they finally played him false. But he bullied them and mastered them at all times. "I am a Barbarian," he says of his physical constitution: "I have their muscular apathy, their nervous languors, their green eyes, and their vast stature."

In the East he enjoyed everything. Nature enchanted him, the wide spaces,

the tropical odors, the monotony of the desert, the blaze of the unbroken sun, the calm splendor of the stars. That wealth of imaginative suggestion which enriches his letters more than those of anyone, unless Keats, is all expended upon depicting and interpreting this charm of the Orient—the color, the solitude; the stinging, penetrating, exotic qualities of sound, and even more the oppression and exhilaration of silence. He carried it all home in his heart and dreamed of it for years. Yet he was well aware that the nature which really counts for us is that we have grown up with. The picturesque of far countries is well enough to remember; but what enters into the tissue of our lives is the woods and fields we have roamed in childhood, the simple flowers and sounds and lights of home. And he reminds us of the profound truth, "It is only commonplaces and well-known countries that have inexhaustible beauty."

If the landscape of the Orient appealed to him, perhaps the humanity appealed to him even more. The intense vivid quickness of his response to the external world, in spite of superficial cynicism, shows in a careless phrase of his later letters: "If one were to derange one's habits for everything that is worth seeing, one would not stay still a minute in an existence of a century." His younger heart did not care to stay still, and his eyes and ears feasted on all that Eastern tumult of passion and movement and color and life.

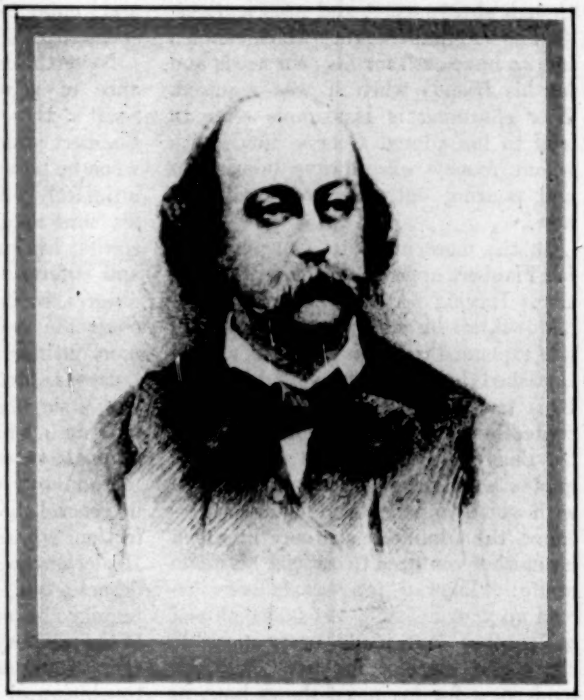
But this was play. After it he went home and settled down and worked, worked with a dogged, persistent, devouring ardor which few literary men, or any other kind of men have ever surpassed. He sat at his desk and stuck there, allowed no diversion, no reasonable, necessary exercise, hardly a duty even to distract him from it. There were moments when nature rebelled, when he had to relax and give up: "I am going to eat, smoke, yawn in the sun, above all sleep. I sometimes have vast impulses to sleep for days on end." But these were only moments. In the main it was a steady, prolonged, terrific effort toward a definite end. For his work was not done, as is that of some authors, with one golden outflow of spontaneous ease. The even, rapid, unfailing production of a Scott or a Sand or a Trollope was incomprehensible to him. With all his enormous labor he cannot accomplish more than half a dozen small books in thirty years. A sentence sometimes costs him hours, even days of toil. A page has to be rewritten and recast and reconceived until it is finally accepted as perfect, if it ever is. "I have now spent three days in making two corrections, which will not come: the whole day Monday, and Tuesday also, were passed in the search for two lines."

Work done so slowly of course implies immense difficulty in the doing. The external difficulties are bad enough, the interruptions, the distractions—petty in themselves but intolerable when the nerves are fretted and strained. People will intrude their chatter and their irrelevance and their questions. Far slighter things than the intrusion of people will set one's thoughts a-dancing, scatter concentration to the winds of heaven. But even with perfect quiet, even in the dim remoteness of midnight, with the curtains drawn and the lamp singing monotonously, there are still the obstacles from within—inexplicable but hampering, harassing, blocking. The words will not put themselves together, the phrases will not get their music, the incidents and the people are all criss-cross and out of place. "I lead a harsh life, barren of all outward delight, and in which I have nothing to sustain me but a sort of enduring rage, which sometimes weeps for impotence, but persists forever. . . . At moments, when I find myself empty, when expression simply refuses to come, when, after having scribbled long pages, I discover that I have not made one single perfect phrase, I fall upon my divan and lie there stupe-

fied in a smother of fatigue and disgust."

Thus often there come waves of vast discouragement and despair. Art is so difficult, so enormously difficult, so impossible. One sees the beauty achieved by others, but somehow one cannot oneself attain it, at least not as one wishes. And at times the despair is so dense, so prostrating that one is tempted to give up altogether, leave art to others, enjoy, and seek to create no longer.

But the born writer cannot give up, never gives up. No matter how the troubles swarm, he grits his teeth, perhaps bows for the moment but is at work again before you know it, grimly determined to deserve success whether he achieves it or not. And then suddenly from one knows not where there come the hours of delight when all goes as it should, when the golden words slip easily into their places and the rich music of the phrase sounds more gloriously in your own ears than perhaps it ever will in any others. And even as you feel it, you analyze it; but you feel it just the same: "I was moved myself, I enjoyed deliciously both the emotion of the subject and of the phrase which rendered it and the satisfaction of having found that phrase. At least I believe there were all these elements in my feeling, in which, no doubt, the strain and quiver of the nerves had an important place. But there was more in it than mere nerves, an ecstasy in which the physical element is nothing, which passes even virtue in spiritual beauty; because it is so independent of everything personal, of every human relation." And so the days and the hours and the years were absorbed in work.



GUSTAVE FLAUBERT
From a drawing by his niece, engraved by Champollion.

But life could not be all work, even with this indefatigable worker. Although the voyaging of youth was over, one could not shut oneself up entirely and forget the world. One's work would be the worse for such a seclusion, if one's heart were not. At least you had to meet humanity, if you did not live with it; to touch men and watch them and talk with them and deal with them, however impatient you might be to get back to pen and ink.

And Flaubert did all these things, did them intelligently if reluctantly, and perhaps not always reluctantly if the truth were known. Business relations indeed he hated, was apparently inept and indifferent in matters of money,

though always exact and conscientious. And he had that frugality which enabled him to have cash for his own needs and for his friends when it was required. How charming is his simple offer to lend to his adored George Sand, with whom money was always pouring in and pouring out, she could not tell how.

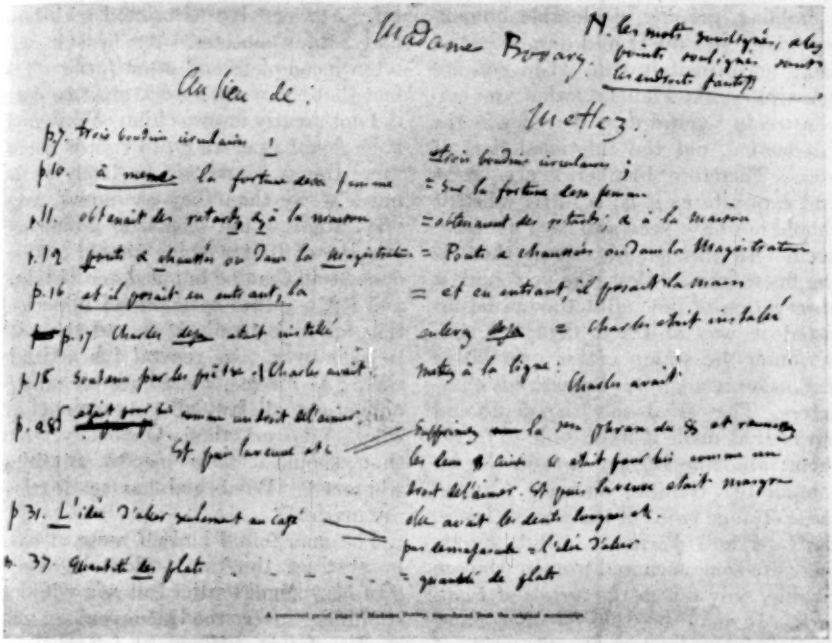
In the more intimate connections of life Flaubert appears thoroughly attractive. Having neither wife nor child of his own, all his real depth of affection was expended upon his relatives, and he cherished them with singular tenderness. It is true that they sometimes interrupted him and bothered him, true that his theory was all against them. He quotes with delighted envy, but also with some appreciation of its significance, the admirable sentence in which his mother ventured to criticize his mode of life: "The rage for phrases has withered up your heart." Yet he worshiped his mother and made every possible effort and sacrifice for her. And his tenderness for his niece shows both in his letters to her and in all her words about him.

But for humanity at large he cannot be said to have had much regard. It is evident that he did not move easily among strangers, did not open himself to them either to give or to receive. He did not have the intense impulse that draws men to their fellows whether they are immediately sympathetic or not—the pleasure in human contact just because it is human. On the contrary he shrank, turned away, or if he looked it was rather to emphasize the tedious and offensive sides. Perhaps he did not enough allow for the tendency to reduce any crowd to its lowest and most conspicuous elements. The *bourgeois*, the average ordinary man with his ordinary thoughts and his ordinary passions and his ordinary laughter, irritated him. When he has to go to a funeral he rebels, not because mortality troubles him but "because the contemplation of the greater part of my fellows grows more and more odious to me, nervously speaking."

Nevertheless, in spite of this appearance of a misanthropy as bitter as Swift's, there is no question but that Flaubert could be a charming companion when he pleased. Those who knew him intimately all testify to his frankness, his cordiality, his boisterous rollicking spirits, his splendid abundance of rich and entertaining talk. At the Magny dinners, so fully described in the Goncourt *Journal*, still more in the later, more intimate reunions with Goncourt, Zola, Daudet, Turgenev—he appears with a singular and attractive abandon, pouring out his own experiences and listening to those of others with equal zest.

And however he detested humanity in general, he was a most devoted, affectionate, and self-sacrificing friend. His letters are full not only of warm tenderness but of constant sympathetic inquiry and solicitude. His attachment to the memory of the poet Bouilhet, and effort to preserve and cherish it are most touching and winning. And there is no sweeter or more charming monument of friendship than the long-continued correspondence between him and George Sand. Though George Sand represented everything in art most different from Flaubert's own achievement and ideal, he was able to appreciate fully the nobility and largeness of her character, and no one understood better than she the passionate contradictions which at once tormented and sustained his lofty effort.

Above all, she insisted that his misanthropy was a pose, that he insisted upon hardening his heart and rebelling against his gentler impulses, but that really his inner nature was all sympathy and kindness; and it is hard to read his letters carefully and not agree with her. He might repeat as much as he pleased, "I have little sensibility for collective misfortunes. Nobody pities my miseries; why should I trouble myself about those of others? I return humanity, what it gives me, *indifference*." But the



A PAGE HAS TO BE REWRITTEN, RECAST, AND RECONCEIVED UNTIL IT IS FINALLY ACCEPTED AS PERFECT, IF IT EVER IS

A list of corrections for the original manuscript of *Madame Bovary*. Reproduced from *Egoists*, by James G. Huneker. Courtesy of Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers.

wide pity peeps through nevertheless: "I have had compassion for many things which ordinarily sensitive people do not trouble themselves about." And one feels the intimate truth of George Sand's assertion: "You try to shut up an overflowing spirit in a jail, to make willful misanthropy out of a tender and indulgent heart—but you will never succeed."

The truth is the man's intelligence and his emotions were at war, as so often happens in this fighting world. The emotions were all pity for human folly and incompetence and, if you like, baseness. But the uncompromising intellect demanded always that life should be other than it is. He was a thoroughgoing idealist, and as with so many of that type the idealism soured into pessimism because it could never be satisfied. The deepest pessimism does not spring from mere negation, still less from a fat and slothful materialism which is apt to enjoy its senses and let the world go. The saddest pessimist is one who asks too much of life and of the living, one whose ideal is so high, whose conception of what men should be, of what men might be is so noble that the sordid reality, as it creeps upon the dull and muddy earth, breeds nothing but perpetual disappointment and despair. Human souls might be glorious in hope, in aspiration, in love, even in actual achievement; and they are—what they are.

So you turn away sadly into the "ivory tower," where ideal thought and beauty dwell, there to weave dreams and visions with exquisite words and phrases that cannot die. Unfortunately, after all the only stuff your dreams are made of, or ever can be, is just this weak-

stumbling, groping, deplorable humanity which you reject and despise. And more unfortunately still, when you are constituted like Flaubert, what you emphasize in your dream weaving is the intellectual, not the emotional part of you. Therefore Flaubert's art, great and exquisite as it is, is bitter when it should not have been and need not have been. All through his novels there is the finest, the subtlest, the profoundest observation of life. But though he insisted it was abstract, detached, impersonal, the stamp of his own bitter disillusion is upon it. So with his characters. They are done with a depth and power that make it impossible to forget them: Madame Bovary herself, the incomparable Homais, Jacques Arnoux, those strange twins of the world's irony, Bouvard and Pécuchet. But surely, there are some men and women who are lovable; only not in the novels of Flaubert. It may be that George Sand saturated her books with the milk of human kindness; yet a drop or two would not have damaged those of her greater friend, no matter how much he would have resented it.

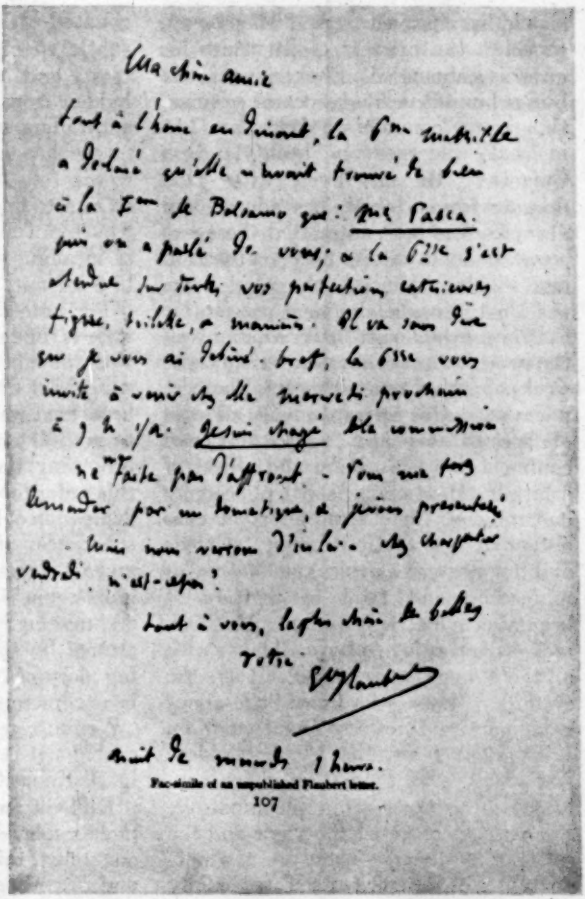
But again you could not work at phrases or dream creatures all the time, whether they were ugly or beautiful. Fortunately there was the world of thought and reflection to distract you, as well as the world of humanity. What marks Flaubert in this as in everything is that he was passionate and intense. There was no casual interest, no light or flippant curiosity for him. Anything that was worth attention was worth profound attention, worth loving or hating with all possible energy.

As regards the subjects of thinking, it could not be expected that he would have much sympathy with applied thought in practical matters. The compromises necessary to run the daily machinery of life were irritating, incomprehensible to him. Action in the sense of the concrete managing of the world's affairs did not tempt him in the slightest. At worst it was tainted with base and sordid motives. At best it was often incomplete and often futile. The fact that the world's work must be done did not greatly impress him. Why must it be done? Let all go to ruin if necessary: things would not be likely to be much worse than they are now. Anyway, what would it matter to Sirius? Far better that a thing should not be done at all than be bungled and botched and left a pitiful spectacle of imperfection for fools to mock at and the wise to sigh over. In general his attitude was: "As for me, I execrate all that is obligatory, all law, all government, all rule. Who art thou, O Society, that thou shouldst *force* me to anything whatever? What god has made thee my master?"

The man found himself more at ease in abstract thinking. Here he could give his splendid ardor full rein without stumbling over the inconvenient obstacles of fact. When he felt that he could let his work go, he liked to surge out into great thoughts; to toss and tumble the problems of the universe with swift, burning, fearless fingers; to set his solid Norman barbarian shoulder to upheaving old theories and dull, secure beliefs, regardless of what might come in place of them. He wanted to read everything, to think everything, to know everything, though his restless activity would have been in despair if anything could have been really known. "I am thirsty for long studies and fierce labors." He read the fathers of the Latin Church. He read the vast series of German philosophers. He tore the world to pieces with his penetrating analysis. Yet so essentially dynamic and constructive was his temperament that the doubt was not merely skeptical but always fruitful, stimulating, full of suggestion and development. Like Keats, he protested against systems, but only in behalf of truth. "Conclusion seems to me, for the most part, an act of folly." Let reason rove, and follow its leading fearlessly into all sorts of

strange regions, always with wonder and delight.

So with religion. Flaubert was never a mocking skeptic, never could have been. Life in all its aspects was too earnest, too serious. You must find the key to it, even if it never could be found. And he had a sort of tenderness for the forms of positive faith. He reads the Bible devotedly. "For three years I read it every evening before going to sleep. At the very first free moment I have I am going to begin again." He has strange spiritual yearnings and might have been a mystic if he had not been an author. Yet with religion as with other things, there is always the dread of fixation, of dogmatism, and the feeling that dogmatism means death. Make your belief as you go, then let your belief make you, and so sweep on into the infinite in a perpetual joyous process of evolution and growth. "Light people, shallow people, presumptuous and eager spirits want conclusions in everything: they seek the object of life and the dimensions of the infinite. They take in their poor little hands a bit of sand and they say to the Ocean: 'I am going to count the grains on all your shores.' But as the grains slip through their fingers and the count is wearying, they tremble and weep. Do you know the only thing to be done on that vast shore? You must either kneel or stroll. I stroll."



Fac-simile of an unpublished Flaubert letter.
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FACSIMILE OF A FLAUBERT LETTER

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But if Flaubert put passion into thinking about God and the universe generally, he put it most of all into thinking about art and beauty, since these matters came so nearly home to himself. He was not particularly interested in sculpture or painting, yet the note of enthusiasm before a bit of ruined statue at Athens rings with the ecstasy with which all loveliness affected him: "How gladly would I have fallen upon my knees before it, with my hands crossed in devotion . . . a little more, and I

should have prayed." And when he approaches the masters of literature his ardor is unbounded. Shakespeare? He buries himself in Shakespeare: common things and common thoughts are lost in that wilderness of beauty. Don Quixote? He has lived with Don Quixote from a child, has adored him always. And be it noted that there was a certain noble affinity between the Don and Flaubert himself—the ideal hope, the ideal struggle, the ideal passion for shattering the noisy, futile windmills of the world. In connection with these works of perfect or aspiring art, Flaubert pours out to his correspondents all sorts of speculations and suggestions and comments on the nature and object of art itself. Here again, as with philosophy and religion, there is no effort at consistent or systematic thinking. Creeds and dogmas are as cold and lifeless, as misleading and fatal in matters of beauty as in matters of pure truth. Feel, seek, aspire, enjoy—above all labor with all the power that is in you. Leave the systems to those who know little about enjoyment and nothing about creation. It is evident enough that Flaubert's ideas and sayings on these things are confused, incoherent, often incompatible. But no one can resist the vigor and the splendor of them. They are the outpourings of a spirit itself splendidly creative, dashing off sparks of dazzling illumination as it goes.

Of course in all the comment and analysis he is thinking of his own creative work. How could it be otherwise? He explains and dissects his artistic practice with constant curiosity and anxiety. To produce beauty, immortal beauty, but how? That is the point. And it cannot be denied that by nature and temperament his attention is mainly fixed upon detail, as indeed he himself admits. He labors with his plan, tries to make a large conception, does make it. Then he spends months and years on the structure of sentences, and somehow the general movement is more or less obscured and effaced. He is enchanted with rhythm, seeks strange and subtle effects of haunting music, contrasts and correspondences, sometimes hidden from all ears but his, yet again enthralling any reader for whom verbal magic has a charm. He works over words, toils to make them yield all their secrets, to find the one perfect expression which can alone convey all the weight of meaning with which his spirit aches to burden it.

For, note that always with Flaubert, style is fundamentally and eternally one with thought. It is no mere varnish, no superficial ornament. It is simply the best, final way of saying what you have to say. If you have nothing to say, style is nothing, there can be none. And so all this ardor for beauty is but ardor for the expression of life. Life is the gross, crude substance; but it is all the substance, and art is merely the means of taking life in its ugliness, its crudeness, its grossness and making it eternal and worthy to be eternal by the transmuting, transfiguring glory of creative loveliness. Poetry is not merely moonshine and flowers: "We must get it out of anything whatever; for it is to be found anywhere and in all things."

Difficult and in some respects incomprehensible as these theorizings may be, one must take them into account in understanding the realism which produced *Madame Bovary* and *L'Education Sentimentale*. It was a matter of principle with Flaubert to take the commonest material, the everyday wear and drag of plain, prosaic, ugly life and show that the highest beauty could be made out of it. Immoral? Was life immoral? Was truth immoral? Be true and your art could not be immoral. Only keep your poor petty personality, your own trivial narrow emotions out of the matter, make your work impersonal and eternal, and it would be as moral as God. Unfortunately we have already seen that what Flaubert considered the personal part of him was his tenderness, his sympathy, all his human and kindly impulses. The impersonal was his in-

tellect. And his intellect was idealistic; it tried poor humanity by an ideal standard and condemned it. Hence his intellect was cruel. So, too, was his work. Yet it is most curious to see how in the splendid spontaneity of his letters, written without labor or effort to make perfect every detail, the whole man shines out in instinctive rebellion against this realistic work that he was doing so completely on a theory. He loved romance, he loved color, he loved poetry, he loved dreams. In the strange visions of *Salammbô* and *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* he indulged these ardors to some extent. But even here the intellect, the bitterness, the analysis trammeled him. There was a cruel conflict in his spirit always; and no labor, no thought, no theorizing sufficed to reconcile or overcome it. He could not somehow attain the serenity of the greatest masters, could not achieve the light and splendor and glory for which he so passionately longed. Scores of passages in the letters suggest the longing, as this on the reveries of his youth: "Between the world and me existed I know not what screen of stained glass, stained yellow with rays of fire and arabesques of gold, so that all things were reflected on my soul as on the pavement of a sanctuary, embellished, transfigured, yet melancholy; and only what was beautiful found place there in dreams more majestic and more richly garmented than cardinals in purple robes. Ah, what shudderings of proud delight, what hymns, what a delicious odor of incense exhaling from a thousand caskets always opened wide! When I am old, I will write all this, and it will warm my heart. I will do as those do who, before setting out upon a long journey, visit the graves of their beloved dead. I, before I die, will revisit my dreams."

This intense, passionate, high-wrought, imaginative temperament of Flaubert constantly recalls Keats, and makes one ask how love, which played such havoc with Keats's imagination, affected Flaubert. It is evident that his general attitude toward women was much the same as that of Keats: they were exquisite toys to trifle with, but somewhat alien from the serious purposes of life. Flau-

FLAUBERT'S HOUSE AT CROISSET
From a contemporary drawing.

bert's comments on the sex at large, on their sentiments and their interests, are too apt to be marked with that fierce and acrid veracity which women find so peculiarly distasteful.

As for marriage and children and domestic life, these things are quite left out of Flaubert's scheme of existence. They may be all very well for the *bourgeois*, necessary and suitable. For the artist they hardly count. Even the praise of marriage treats it from an ideal point of view which amounts to satire: "I believe, like the pariah of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, that happiness is to be found with a good woman. The difficulty is to come across her, and to be oneself a good man, a double and quite appalling preliminary." Children Flaubert rarely if ever mentions. No doubt he loved those near to him and did what he could for them, as evidently for his niece: but there is nothing of Victor Hugo's or Swinburne's adoration.

Yet it was impossible that such an ardent soul should not understand and to some extent cherish ideal passions, no matter how much analysis might undermine and destroy them. In his extreme youth there was a certain lady at Trouville who took possession of his whole being, till her image mastered and involved years of his life. But the way in which love shows itself most with that literary temperament is in the caressing dreams of memory, and the passages in which Flaubert elaborates and dwells upon these have extraordinary vividness: "I recall the spasms that shook me, the depths of grief, the strange longings, like gusts hissing through a vessel's cordage, and the vast vague desires whirling in the black void, like gulls in the fury of tempest." Or again he has this subtle and profound definition of melancholy: "No! No! Days of gayety have too, too sad to-morrows, and melancholy is nothing but a past which does not know itself."

The only later love affair that seems to have taken deep hold upon Flaubert's life is that recorded for us in the long series of letters to Madame X (Louise Colet), covering, with a considerable break, the years from 1846 to 1854. If this love had no other significance it would have immortal value in having produced these letters; for there are none in the world, except a few of Keats', that can pretend to rival them in height and depth of imaginative intensity and beauty. Flaubert pours out his whole life and thought, his whole ambition and effort and despair in these wonderful pages, with the speed and abandon which he so carefully and tragically kept out of his books. As for love, well, it must be admitted that he was a singular lover. He tries his best, lashes his sides to achieve the ideal which perhaps no one but him could have conceived or aimed at. Yet the damnable analysis will enter and show its lurking serpent head everywhere.

The truth was that love was doubtful as an ideal, and extremely difficult in actual practice. It was a craving to get fulfilment outside oneself, and this was weakness after all: "for it is corruption not to be sufficient unto oneself." At any rate, love was difficult for him: he was not made for it, or, however it might have been in young days at Trouville, at thirty he was past the age of ecstasy. "A man like me, grown old in all the excesses of solitude, ready to collapse with nervous strain, torn with dead, trampled passions, full of uncertainty without and even within, is not the one you should have loved." Love is too violent, tumultuous, full of conflict and despair; he does not know what to make of it or do with it: "Such is my pitiable nature: if you did not love me, I should die; you love me, and I write and beg you to stop loving. . . . Yet, don't, don't curse me: I shall have loved you enormously before I love you no longer."

But there was no use talking; the demands of this insatiable, eternal feminine were too exacting, were impossible. He wrote to her, he thought of her, he loved her, what did she want more? His whole self? My God! He couldn't give

it: no man could who had a self worth giving. Jealous? What was she jealous of? The old lips he had kissed, the old thoughts he had flung away? He could not dig them up and tear them in pieces: why not let them rest? He gave her what he could, all he could, more than he could. It was poor enough, but it was all: why not be content? "I love you as I can, not enough, I know it. But, my God! whose is the fault?"

Then there was his art. After all, his art was his life and the rest was mere distraction, at least he could give it only the leavings, however unworthy. "How can you expect that a man bruised and crushed by art as I am, perpetually craving an ideal that he can never attain . . . should love with a heart of twenty years and should have that ingenuousness which is the supreme charm of all passion?" He urges her to remember that there is something in life more than enjoyment, more than love even, "something that sings through everything, no matter whether one stops one's ears, or gives one's whole soul to listening to it, something to which the merely *contingent* is of no account, and which has the nature of the angels, who require no mortal nourishment: I mean the ideal." But she was a woman, and the ideal seemed cold to her, chilly and far away, especially as it was his ideal, not hers. And the end was as might be expected. What she felt we shall never know. But he, after due protest and regret, shut himself into that tower of ivory, and made phrases for twelve hours a day with more than a lover's ardor, and forgot.

And one asks, as usual rather vainly, why he did it? Was it the desire of success, fame, applause, to flutter through the mouths of men? Yet Flaubert joins the almost unanimous chorus of artists who vociferate loudly that they do not care for this. It is rare indeed that one meets the straightforward honesty of the Goncourt's avowal: "Our disease at bottom is literary ambition, insatiable and embittered, the perpetual irritation of the vanity of letters, when the newspaper that does not speak of you wounds you, and that which speaks of others drives you to despair." With Flaubert there is no such frankness as this. He works apart, indifferent, and the rapture or railing of the crowd is not supposed to affect him.

All the same, the criticisms do prick, and the scorn and the abuse when one knows that one is doing one's best. To work ten years with unselfish devotion on a masterpiece and then publish it and be haled into the police court as an enemy of morality is intensely disagreeable, however one may contemn the opinions of men. The *Père Beuve* is a great critic, but when he ventures to pick flaws in *Salammbô*, it is hard to think of his greatness or his criticism with equanimity. And again one goes on working, gives up life and love for it, in one's later years turns out phrases that appear to ring with a strange magic, such as no ear or heart can resist—and the public is callous or even mocking, and the dim echo of it all in an ivory tower is not soothing to nerves always stretched to tortured tautness by abnormal effort.

No, glory is not indifferent, and the verdict of readers must be considered as well as one's own. In Flaubert's younger days there is a fairly frank word about it: "I do not despise glory . . . My heart has beaten at the word perhaps more passionately than most hearts." And even toward the end he permitted himself to be fooled by the thought of it—as Henry James was—into that most bewitching, ensnaring, deluding, defrauding of all seductions for the purely literary man—the theater. And if he did not know the sweet of glory in this line, he at least tasted all the intensity and bitterness of disappointment.

Yet, after all, glory was a small part of it, and what really counted was the pure delight of creating beauty, of feeling these strange, mysterious, magical phrases emanate in their satisfying perfection from depths of your being that

you did not know and could not understand. There was toil about it, torture about it; but there was rapture about it also, beyond the rapture of worldly success, beyond the rapture of contented and eternally discontented love. Joy was not the word, happiness was not the word: it was rather the mystic's ecstasy of self-achieving, self-dissolving oblivion.

And so with all these months and years of enormous, exhausting labor, shattering the nerves and withering up the heart, Flaubert left behind him his half dozen books which posterity will prize among its treasures. Yet curiously enough the very effort of perfection that he lavished upon them seems to make the imperfections stand out all the more. On the other hand, his letters, which presumably he did not work over at all, and which simply welled up from the profoundest depths of his passionate soul, will always remain some of the richest and finest expressions of such a soul that the world has ever seen. And still more curiously it was the extreme endeavor of his art to be objective and impersonal, to render life without the intrusion of his own emotions and experiences; yet the part of his work that touches us most is the intense utterance of himself. *Madame Bovary* is the triumph of the art, but the letters are the triumph of the artist.

SINCE YOU PASSED BY

BY SYLVIA MORRIS

I KNOW some things, since you passed by,
I never knew before:
That I could hold a pretty thing
And drop it to the floor;
Could hear a key turn in a lock
Yet beat upon the door;

That I can speak when I am dumb
And wish you a "Good-day,"
Though every sense has hid its head
And scampered far away,
And nothing can I hear at all
Of what my own lips say;

That love's a prisoned bubble held
In a window pane;
That many things be counted loss
That are most precious gain;
No penny's worth a single thought,
And sunshine's less than rain.

And here's another thing I know:
I've learned I can be true;
And isn't it a pity that
I should learn this of you,
Who never know where I may be
Or care what I may do?

PRINCESSE DE CONDÉ AS DIANA

BY JEAN MARC NATTIER

(Reproduced on the cover of this Magazine)

DURING the lifetime of Jean Marc Nattier, Watteau, Boucher, Chardin, Greuze, and Fragonard were at one time or another painting in France—strong competition for one who hoped for fame as it is recorded in bank statements! But Nattier pulled through in spite of bad luck made worse by a temperament too gentle for a successful money maker. He discovered the secret of feminine charm, and with soft brushes he transformed the plain or peculiar features of social leaders of the time of Louis XV into an engaging type, perfect as to complexion and modest in sensuality. After a short period the court was all aflutter over these "beautiful likenesses." For the time being the gentle flatterer was a made man.

One wonders if his preoccupation with money was wholly natural to him. It seems rather to have been forced on him by the financial troubles of his father's household, where lived a paralytic mother and a brother who came to an expensive and criminal end. Jean Marc showed no particular love for money, though compelled to a persistent interest in it. When he married he believed he was doing a stroke of good business, but the matter turned out to be after all only an affair of love. His wife's family, like himself, had lost heavily in the Mississippi Bubble—that strangely modern example of juggling with unlimited paper money. Young Nattier had previously let slide an opportunity to become painter to Peter the Great, Tsar of Russia; he couldn't determine whether or not it would be a profitable venture. At other times he could not bring himself to collect payments due for portraits of Princesses. So it would be unfair to lay against him any suggestion of greed. He had rather an indecisive character, which is exactly what one reads in the self-portrait now hanging at Versailles.

In another sense this helped him on his career. For it was the indecisiveness of his work which made it so acceptable to the self-satisfied world of Paris and the court. The portrait of the Princesse de Condé as Diana, reproduced on the cover, shows the method of this "pupil of the Graces," who persuaded his sitters that they were as fair as any on the theatrical eighteenth-century version of Mount Olympus. After his hour of fashion was over people said that Nattier painted with face powder. And the criticism sticks in one's mind as being quite just. He dealt in rouged cheeks, vaporous eyes, in silks and satins and expensive nothings. Even his most highly praised portrait, that of Marie Leczinska, Queen of France, seems perfumed with a medley of boudoir preparations. If we admire Nattier to-day, it is largely because in this very respect he was true to the "expensive nothings," the noble society of his time.

ALAN BURROUGHS.

AN OCEANIC VOLCANO

BY H. M. TOMLINSON

BUT for the durian, the spell of Ternate in the Moluccas might not have been broken. I should have lost count of days and nights. I might have imagined that I had been cast upon a place beyond time and storms and was living on another plane. There is much to be said for the lotus. It is a benign gift. What happens when we neglect it is seen in the strained and haggard aspect of morally superior communities. But the durian is different. I did not know that, however, when I mentioned it to my companion, the Dutch missionary, as a famous Malay fruit I had not experienced. Nor did his answer forewarn me. He became alert and eager at once. He confessed he was greedy when he saw a durian. He said grandly that it was the king of fruits. Other men, I remembered, have been as extravagant over the durian. What is it Russel Wallace told us?—

"Its consistence and flavour are indescribable. A rich butter-like custard highly flavoured with almonds gives the best general idea of it, but intermingled with it come wafts of flavour that call to mind cream-cheese, onion sauce, brown sherry, and other incongruities . . . rich . . . glutinous . . . perfect . . . a new sensation, worth a voyage to the East to experience."

What a fruit! The *padre* assured me most earnestly that he would get me a durian. I must eat one. Then my soul would be more gracious. However, he must have forgotten it. No durian came. Then late one afternoon I returned from an attempt upon the mountain and was light-hearted after losing myself in a forest above the clouds which refused to let me pass. I had seen crimson lories flying in solitude like pigeons. A great bird-winged butterfly, a gold and emerald Ornithoptera which till then had never been more than a colored flash in the distance, that day paused overhead, planed down to a flower which was near my face, and pulsed its vivid body so near that I could see the quivering of its antennæ. We may call mind the aim of life, if that flatters us, but the tense life which vibrated that superb creature evidently was obeying a command which we have never heard! No sooner had it gone than a Papilio even larger, a very folio butterfly in black, crimson, and primrose alighted on the same white trumpet, weighing down the pendulous and swinging flower and dancing to its movements. Overhead an eagle was poised, surveying the mountain seawards. He knew I was watching him. His bright eye kept meeting mine severely. The sea was even more remote below us than some of the clouds. I got back to the veranda of the rest house, tired but pleased, and was going to my door, but stopped . . . what was that?

I forgot the crimson lories. My memory went straight back to an old German dugout with its decaying horrors. I thought I must have been mistaken, but advanced cautiously. Nothing could be there, I told myself, that was like the trenches of the Flers line. Confidence returned; the suggestion had gone. Then the ghost passed me again, invisible, dreadful, and I clutched the table, looking round. At first I could determine nothing, but presently on a wall bracket I saw resting a green and spinous object as large as a football, and tiptoed to smell it.

It was!

The *padre* appeared, but was not dismayed. Instead he called a native with a knife to open the durian. The man performed this on the green porcupine most expertly from one end, disclosing soft and creamy contents. I tried to forget the smell, took a portion and, as they used to say in France, went over the top in daylight. But I knew at once this was my last durian. Facing the foe, I fell. That indelicate odor, and the flavor of a sherry custard into which garlic had been slipped overshadowed Ternate for some hours afterward. The smell shamelessly wandered about, and the taste of the garlic remained after the sherry was forgotten. Only sleep interposed to stop my bewilderment over what Russel Wallace could have meant by it.

And in the morning there was something else to think about. With the assistant Resident—a young Dutchman who talked like a boy from an English public school because that was what he was—I was to attempt the crater of the volcano. It was two hours before dawn. Sirius was blazing over Gilolo. We wished to be well up the slope before the sun was there. But our two Malay porters had another opinion about the need for an early start, and Sirius was paling into a sky of rose and madder before we got away. Our men, father and son, were not so interested in that mountain as the other two in the party. The father was the guide, and carried a *parang*, a bright Malay weapon of such weight and balance that it is good for either agriculture or homicide. Not one of our party knew the mountain above the upper forest, and only the guide and myself had been as far as the forest; for Ternate, even official Ternate, though its interest in its crater is acute, yet is satisfied with a distant prospect from the beach. This oceanic volcano is fifty-two hundred feet high at present, and in the sun which is usual to the island the summit may be said to look out of sight. Why go? One need not.

But if one goes the beginning is made in elation. The gardens of spices and the coconut groves are traversed with ease. The gardens are cool and scented. The ascent is gradual. You feel that such a journey could be continued forever, and that any material refreshment would profane it. But suddenly and brusquely the slope is not gradual. It is quite otherwise. For a few minutes while a fierce light beats upon you—no more nutmeg trees—and the ground is rough which rises within a foot or so of the nose, you suppose that this interlude is only a playful gesture by the mountain. It wishes to test your devotion. In this it succeeds. When you pause, the thumping of the heart is like the pulse of the silence. The perspiration drips from the fingers. You are surprised, and a little dashed. Every mirthful thought has deserted and gone home. When the uplands are surveyed to see if they are any nearer, sweat runs into the eyes. And they are not any nearer. The slope is immediate, continuous, tractless, and tropical, and the summit has vanished behind that overhanging forest which has yet to be reached. This playful little gesture of the mountain seems to be its normal attitude, and requires some thought.

So our party discovered this morning. With what enterprise the Dutchman strode ahead, energetically kicking pebbles backward at me! He was as frolicsome as a goat. He leaped from root to root where they were tangled in the shady path like cables. I followed meekly, wondering how long I should last. I hoped his ebullience would be diluted presently. The sun came up; but we were still deep in the plantations. My companion appeared to have decided that the British should see what a little nation could do; and it had clearly dawned on me that, though my flag may have braved the battle and the breeze for a respectworthy period, I should disgrace it in a race to the crater against Holland.

While I was still valiantly holding

out, determined to go on or drop dead on the track, I saw my friend stop, take off his helmet, and gaze into it reflectively. He did not move when I reached him. That was a good chance to show him the attractive character of the sugar canes growing beside us, their plumes surmounting staffs which were of chocolate circled regularly with thin gold. If one stood in a certain way, I assured him, the chocolate had a purplish bloom. But my friend wiped his face and gazed at me with an expression abjectly pathetic.

We turned aside, while recovering, to a small cluster of native huts. They were built on a narrow step of the slope, from which we looked out over treetops to the place below where the village was a smudge on a long serpenting coast. Under a thatch apart were several shrines to the spirits of the sea and land, and in one of them was a good model of a sailing *prahu*, beside which was placed a little rice to prosper somebody's voyage. But only the chickens were about; we saw no ghosts of the sea or land, and not even a solid husbandman.

The sun was now above the trees, apparently crystallizing the foliage into rigidity with its straight glare. We continued our upward toil. The sun was on our backs. Above a half-acre of scratched earth, in which were hasty pineapples, tobacco, and cassava, the track vanished completely at a point where an earthquake had flattened three huts. That clearing was grown over with labiate herbs and a kind of raspberry. Above it the cliff of the forest regarded the huts and the advancing wayfarers with such impassive aloofness, as though man were a late and unimportant curiosity on the earth, that I myself felt it might be as well to erect a shrine to whatever hamadryads haunt tropical groves. But my Dutchman, though he affably agreed, did not appear to get more than a misty notion of the idea, so we continued to ascend.

Our guide disappeared in a canebrake. We stooped and followed him, and at last were crawling astern of the sound of the Malay's busy knife. This original progress began in amusement—at least it was a relief from the sun; but I could not help noticing, in less than a minute, that a tunnel full of spikes and air like steam has its disadvantages. Then we had to stop and wait on our hands and knees, for we could not hear our guide. Suddenly his *parang* broke loose again somewhere on my left, and as abruptly ceased. The guide's face, after a long silence, pushed aside the stems near us—how native to the wilderness is a Malay's face when morosely it just peeps out of jungle grass!—and he told us he was lost. It had seemed to me that it might be so, for the *parang* had had a wild and erratic ring, as though the obstinate vegetation were being punished. We crawled back therefore in the reverse order, and the elegant young Dutchman reverted to his native language, as that, probably, was better equipped for expressing the results of the brittle but resistant nature of the herbage on the knees. The guide, though, was a good man. The world is wide, his manner led us to infer, and the day is young. Why not get lost? He turned on the mountain again with a quiet energy altogether different from his early display. For the first time I began to suspect that we might reach the summit.

He went to the gigantic grass again, struck it with his knife, and thus sank into it. We stooped in slow pursuit of him; sometimes crawled, were whipped in the face by elastic stems, were stiletto-ed and bayoneted. I learned, being so near to the earth, why grains and spores turned at once into such a high tumult, for what was under my hands was warm and humid, and I should not have been surprised to feel it stir at my touch. We continued to move carefully on hands and knees, but excepting that we were going up I had no sense of our direction; only a tangle of dark ribbons could be seen overhead. Why was I enjoying it, even as I withdrew

another broken dagger from my trousers, wiped the sweat from my face on my sleeve, and looked at the blood on my hands? I don't know. Perhaps some of the energy which jetted upward in that mass of hard green fountains was charging me. The smell was strange, and it may have been the original smell of earth; we may have been close to a young and salutary body. I had an idea that if I crawled long enough there I might overtake some lost time. It was while bravely continuing with this fortifying thought that we emerged from the cane and found ourselves in an open space with the jungle at hand. But before toiling up to attack that towering palisade we thought we ought to pause and recover uprightness, so we deposed our gear about us, reclined on a fallen tree, and contemplated the way we had come. The Malays crouched below us. They are very good at contemplation. They can maintain it all day if necessary, and without a movement.

Our log was situated well on the way to the clouds. It might have been a seat on the edge of a darker cloud. The log was hot and dry, being nearer to the sun. I was idle-minded—I felt that I had been excused from what was necessarily occupying the attention of envious men, who were now a long journey below us. The way we spent time here was no matter, because it was unlimited and unmeasured. The corrugations of the log were lanes and alleys for an industrious population of ants, and I watched them with the calm abstraction of an immortal who was far too great to understand the reason for so much activity and resolute enterprise which apparently got the tiny laborers nowhere, except into trouble now and then. But they appeared to like it. They did not know they were ants. With what industry and courage they carried particles up and over the ridges of the log, which were mountain ranges to them, determined to get their burdens somewhere, however high their mountains! They took no notice of the contemplative gods above them, and very little of the commotions and earthquakes the gods made on the log with idle fingers. Probably that log was too immense for them to know, so how could they understand that it was only one log of a forest in a small island which, to the knowledge of the immortals, was insignificant among many islands of a vast globe? No doubt most of them got their particles safely home by evening. Success, success!

A little way down the incline, upright on the verge of space, were two areca palms, but far more distinguished and remarkable shapes than ever before I had seen those trees. They framed a far vision of Gilolo and cloudland. It was not easy to say at once which was island and which was vapor. But then, even the minor projecting sprays and fronds about us there seemed strangely posed and of more than the usual significance. The bee which alighted on a labiate flower at my feet was not related to anything I knew. I was invading his world, which seemed to have been warned of intruders and was curiously intent and quiet. Nothing moved there but the bee, and perhaps he had not yet heard news of the invasion. Immediately below the black figures of the areca palms the eastern coast of Ternate and the sea reminded me of the indentations of a chart on which the ocean was symbolized with the usual color. It was not easy to believe that our mountain top was based on anything more substantial than a tinted presentiment of earth.

The Dutchman overcame the spell and the silence with a shout, and we rose to face the rest of the upward journey, which was only half done. A little climb brought us to the woods, and there we worked at first along the edge of a ravine the bottom of which was in night. We entered by a wilderness of bamboos and the crackling of the dry parchments of their spathes under our feet made an uproar which startled me, for it announced us to every dryad on the

mountain. And there is no arguing with bamboo piping. If the pipes are stacked in any number in your way, then you must find a path round them or go back. The forest grew darker as we worked toward the head of the chasm. It was dank and elfish. The light was dim. The shapes of the trunks and boughs were gnomelike. The way along the edge of the ravine was difficult with wreckage which looked like fallen trunks, but the shapes collapsed at a touch. They were only a treacherous semblance. The profusion and variety of the ferns, the queer tricks of parasitic growths—one decadent climber, its air roots no more than spider-webbing, studded a tree with fleshy discs like green dollars—and an occasional view on the stem or the under side of a leaf of a shield-bug as brilliant as a black and scarlet flower, ought to have kept us from going farther, but the intelligent curiosity of adventurers always moves them on from what they see is good to what they know nothing about.

The slope often rose so steeply that the angle seemed unsafe for so heavy a load of forest. When we looked upward the trees were descending in apparition at a noiseless speed. We were always on the point of being overwhelmed. It was an act of faith when a projection was grasped for support, because you imagined the vast overhanging weight would at once begin to revolve with the extra burden. That sense of insecurity made the shock the greater when a bough gave way. But we did not fall far; the next tree below checked us and flung us against another tree and that one threw us to the ground. Luckily it was much cooler up there. A full view of the sky was infrequent, even when we looked back. When we looked down, during a pause to recover breath, instead of the contorted tentacles of aged roots ridden by fungi and moss reaching toward our faces, and the columns leaning out of the shades, there was an upper show, in a light which was as fixed and greenish as a rare fluid that no wind could stir, of giant leaves even more fantastic than the succuba of roots; banners of wild plantain, hanging tongues and cables of epiphytes and climbers, and the crowns of tree ferns which suggested, in that light, that we were lost in time and not in space, and had worked backward to the Mesozoic epoch.

From the beach of the island, looking toward the summit, above the forest one sees what appears to be grassland. It seems from below as smooth as the English South Downs. We emerged from the forest at last into this very upper region, and found the grass. I had been looking forward to the experience of tramping over bare downs at such an elevation above a tropical sea. But that smooth grass was elephant stuff ten feet high, and for another half-hour we could not see more than a yard about us. Then our way began to descend, so that when we got out of the tunnel we had cut we were in a great bare depression of the mountain, which from below would not have seemed to be more than a dimple. To the bottom of this we had to make our way, with but one brief peep ahead of the terminal cone to encourage us. The cone was certainly much nearer, but surprisingly more distant than I had expected to find it from that vantage; and our outlook was more restricted than we should have found it in most of the by-ways of the village below. The ground of that basin and up the farther slope of it was broken and thinly grown over with coarse grass. But I must confess that I had ceased to pay much attention to the details of our circumstances, for I had the feeling which, I suppose, used to trouble those who could hear as they approached him the grumblings in the fiery belly of Moloch. We were very much by ourselves, and the god, although as yet his face was hidden from us, was immense and powerful. Now we knew it. We smelled him now and then. His breath was of the Pit. I began to have premonitions concerning the security of

the tenure of those spice gardens down below. We toiled up to the top of the ridge which veiled the face of the god.

At last, there *he* was. He was black and naked, and smoke was drifting from his head. And he was still some distance away, apart, elevated, and awful in the serene blue. It was clear that Milton had wrongly reported his expulsion from Heaven. He still dwelt there. In fact, he had it to himself. He was solitary in the sky, monstrous and fuliginous under his lovely canopy, with a desolate court about him, and a footstool of blackened ruin from which the angels had fled.

Before we could mount to his throne we had to make another long descent, as it were an act of obeisance; and as the Dutchman, who had become very humble, advanced deferentially over the cinders and clinker, I could see plainly that though we might hope to be ignored, divine compassion in this spot was as absent as the supernal choir. Our only luck would be to find the god asleep.

This, too, was the worst stage of the journey. We were compelled to forget the distant prospects. We had to keep our eyes searching for likely foothold in the chaos of knives and ax blades made in the slag. A slip in that chaos of spiked and edged metal would have been ugly; and a few minutes of the careful exercise made us pause. There was not a sound. The buzzing of an invisible fly was remarkable. During the pause I noticed in surprise that our exertions had taken us but a little distance. The journey to the bottom of the descent and up the final slope had been prodigiously lengthened since we had discovered what a walk to a crater was like. The two Malays, I observed, were seated on the top of the ridge we had left and were again in contemplation. They were not fools. They had no desire to look into the gape of a volcano. Their curiosity was already satisfied. Around us on the litter of broken ore were scattered numberless great bowlders that had acquired a horrid iridescence and some flowers of sulphur on cooling. They were the bombs which the god throws about when he is playful. But at the moment all sound had ceased except the murmur of that unseen fly, who kept with me for company; and the only movement was the quivering of the air over the heated stones, for the sun was magnificent.

By the time we reached the edge of the crater every ten yards had grown to a mile, and we were in the tired mood to be insulting, even if challenged by Cerberus. There was no sign, however, that our approach had been noticed. We were free to gaze into the open mouth of the god. He was fast asleep, and breathing so gently that his gusts of vapor were slight and unalarming. Our own foothold was more disconcerting than the crater. It was not easy to find a standing place that was clear of communication with the nether fires. Vents and fissures everywhere were exhaling hot mephitic gases, and when I thought I had found a corner, by a huge bomb, which gave me a space exempt where I might be at ease, a fumarole presently became active under my feet and sent up strong sulphurous blasts. The rocks about me were bright with the lichens of Tophet, lurid incrustations of chemicals which showed more than anything else the kind of garden we were in.

The crater itself was halved by a wall, and the half within our view—we did not visit the other half—was a precipitous hollow the bottom of which seemed choked with rocks; but as to that I offer no definite opinion, for I did not climb down far enough to satisfy a scientific conscience, but only a conscience which is amenable to desire. Those stained cliffs were not usual. The crags were calcined red and black, and they were blotched with sulphur and verdigris; there were occasional bursts of steam from their shadows. That gape was loaded and charged. The desire to play adventurously inside such a muzzle vanished at the sight of it. When the natives of Ternate prudently as-

semble their canoes at signs more violent than usual, and even abandon their nutmeg groves, they are not showing timidity, for on the summit I got the impression that in the belly of the island there was a power latent which could lift it bodily from the sea.

But where was the sea? As soon as we turned from the crater and looked outward we forgot the infernal fires. There was no sea, however. There was no sky. There was only a gulf of light which was blue in infinity. We were central in space. We looked southward for the cluster of the Moluccas, but in that blue vacancy the islands and the clouds were all immaterial; the isles of Motir, Makian, and distant Batchian were mere conjectures, though in that clear and tranquil light I imagined I could see as far as Paradise and the solution of sorrow. But what is an island when the clouds float below it? There we saw Motir, the nearest of those suppositions of land, a frail and pallid wraith which did not move from its place in the blue but was constant in the midst of the traveling islands of cloud. Some of them, in appearance, passed under it.

Gilolo had sunk profoundly. It was only a lower abstraction of bays and promontories. Beyond it the glimmering sapphire was the Pacific. Our near neighbor, Tidore, and the lower slopes of our island were occasionally revealed; we had immediately below us at times a far but vivid memory of the green world we left one fine morning. But that memory would dissolve under lambent white ranges of cloud, and then we were marooned again on a raft of burnt rocks translated to the neighborhood of the sun. The clouds of the trade wind were much more substantial than Gilolo. They approached us as lunar continents, resplendent and majestic, moved down rapidly on our meager upper foothold as though to sweep us along, but divided below us and surged past in shining ranges while our raft in midway space felt anchored to but the slenderest hope.

It was with reluctance that we began our return. We had a surmise that we should like to continue forever in that upper light where what was mundane was reduced to faint symbols and abstractions; but doubted the value of our intuition. We had but little faith that we could maintain ourselves in that rare light, in that serene expanse; and perhaps we were right. We are not ready for it yet. We plunged downward rapidly, once we were over the slag heaps, and were soon in the gloom of the forest. The forest seemed more secure, its darkness more homely, its troll-like shapes more in accordance with the heart of man than a luminous vision of infinity.

I do not know how long it took us to descend. We fell automatically. Fatigue flung us, at times, long distances which did not seem to bring us any nearer to home. The never-ending jolts in weariness destroyed thought, and reduced the mind to a heavy enduring lump. My personal lump acquired a measure of intelligence again when at last some inconstant sparks in the air took my attention, and I found they were fireflies in a Chinese graveyard. We were nearing sea level. Then music approached, and lanterns, and a wedding party passed by with tom-toms, pipes, and dance. My friend the Dutch missionary stood near. He was relieved to see me there once more. "I've been praying for you," he remarked grimly. He was thinking of the nether fires. But he did not know that perhaps it was his very prayer which had saved me from the danger of a transcendental mirage of sublimity.

JULIE CANE

A NOVEL—PART VI

BY HARVEY O'HIGGINS

XXX

THERE were no tennis rackets to be bought in Findellen, but tennis balls were procurable, and Alan found, in the stationery and toy shop, a baseball catcher's left-hand glove with a palm pad as large and thick as a leather tambourine. Could they sell him four of these? They could—at an extravagant price. He bought them. The shop had no paper in which to wrap them, so Van Schoeck and he paraded back through Center Street with the gloves under their arms, to the amazement of the street's small boys, who could not imagine what anyone would want with enough catcher's gloves to outfit a minor league. And when they arrived at the Carey veranda, where Julie was waiting for them, she and Alice and her mother were equally amazed.

Alan waved one of the gloves to greet them as he came up the path. "We're going to play handball—hand tennis," he cried. "I never played it in my life; did you?"

Mrs. Carey had been worried. She had not wished to resume neighborly relations with the Birdsalls. But he had so much the air of an innocently irresponsible schoolboy that she could not resist him; and he bantered his way through the introductions—supported by Van Schoeck's beaming solemnity and Alice's excited laughter—with a high spirit that carried all before him.

"Come along, Mrs. Carey," he begged, fastening a glove on Alice's hand. "You'll have to umpire us."

"But I don't know anything about it."

'Neither do I! Neither does anyone! It's a new game. We'll have to make up the rules. You can make them up as well as anybody."

He almost persuaded her to do it. She had to fall back on the plea that the sunlight might start one of her headaches. And she even looked a little wistful as the four of them turned at the hedge to wave to her, and Alan lined them up to make her an absurd military salute with their huge mitts, like semaphores.

It seemed to he that her husband had been, as usual, wrong to dislike such an entirely charming boy.

Julie was a bit bewildered. The purchase of the gloves was plainly a wild extravagance. The idea of inventing a game to play with them was foolish. She would have played tennis as she played chess, to master it; but how could you master a game that had no rules? It was like being invited to join in a dance for which there were no steps. She felt silly.

"Julia and I will play you two," he announced as they came through the Birdsall orchard. "Mother'll umpire it. We'll have to shake hands before we begin, like prize fighters. This way." He offered Alice his glove, throwing his other hand up like a fencer. They struck their padded palms together. "Now then." He turned on Van Schoeck, and began to spar left-handed; and Van Schoeck, making a quick feint, reached out and slapped his hat off. "Fine! First round to Kid McCoy. Fifteen love. The boy's good. Slow but deadly. Oh, *mother!*" He had caught

sight of her among the flower beds. "*Mother!*" He waved to her. "Come and help your son. They're picking on him."

It was a very gay group, all smiles, which went to meet her. Van Schoeck had laughed, in one of his violent outbursts, when he knocked off Alan's hat; and he broke into another hilarious guffaw at Mrs. Birdsall's surprised expression as they approached her.

"You remember Julia Cane," Alan called to her. "And Alice Carey. They've come to finish that game of tennis. I've got some more balls."

She had been digging in the garden with a trowel; and she stood waiting for them, bareheaded, her hair white in the sun, wearing an overcoat of Alan's, a baggy tweed skirt, a pair of heavy laced shoes. In that costume she looked exaggeratedly dumpy and set. Julie would not have known her from a distance, but on a closer view the change in her was less striking. Her face had not aged. It was only plumper and less vivacious. Her smile was slower. And after the first few moments she looked more at Alan than at the others.

He put his arm round her with a proprietory affection as she greeted the two girls. She received them as old friends of whom she had nothing but pleasant memories. But it was noticeable that he did not succeed in communicating to her any of his excited gayety. Her smile was merely motherly as she listened to his explanations of the catcher's mitts; and Julie got the impression that it was more Alan's arm round her than her own inclination which drew her along with them toward the tennis court.

She turned to Julie in the midst of Alan's exposition of the game of hand-tennis to ask, "Can you stay to luncheon with us? And Alice?" And when he took up that idea eagerly, and together they overcame Julie's objections—she could telephone to Martha, as Alice to her mother—Mrs. Birdsall stopped at the path to the kitchen door and said, "I'd better see how they're getting on with that old range. I'll be with you in a few minutes."

"All right," Alan agreed easily. "Hurry up." And Julie found herself, for no intelligent reason, depressed.

Her depression passed off in the absurdities of their hand tennis. The grass court had not been rolled for years; and it was winter-heaved and April-soggy; the markings of the base and court lines had long since disappeared; the decayed net that Alan and Van Schoeck had strung was as tattered as a discarded seine; they all found it difficult to strike the ball deftly with the left hand, particularly when serving; and most of their time was spent in burlesque disputes about whether the ball had bounded inside the required lines or not. Julie and Van Schoeck were inclined to be sober and determined about their play. Alice was giggly, and Alan kept her so. Under all their minds was that exciting stimulus of young attraction which made the game possible; they played so as to be together, on any terms, and were amused.

Mrs. Birdsall did not join them; and after several humorously peevish comments on her absence, Alan broke up the game to seek her out. And they never returned to hand tennis. With an inconsequence that troubled Julie—after all his excited preparations and the purchase of expensive gloves and a degree of expectation sufficient for a fancy-dress ball—he played his absurd game for less than half an hour, dropped it suddenly, and never spoke of it again. He found his mother in the kitchen and dragged her forth, scolding her affectionately, and sent her upstairs to dress. He had the manner of a popular husband who is trying to make his stay-at-home wife share in his social success as a host; and this marked such a change in Mrs. Birdsall, as Julie remembered her, that the girl frowned over it and was thoughtful, recalling some of Carey's reports on how Alan had his mother "terrified."

He teased her at the luncheon table,

SHE HAD BEEN DIGGING IN THE GARDEN AMONG THE FLOWER BEDS

for the amusement of the others, and she took it good-humoredly. The conversation had got round to books, and he declared that Elbert Hubbard was the only author his mother ever read. His own opinion of Hubbard was scandalous. She retorted with a poke at Aubrey Beardsley and *The Yellow Book*, of which Julie knew nothing.

It seemed—although she had not known it—that the world, a few years before, had passed through a "little-magazine movement" which had failed and left Alan pessimistic. His talk was all about *The Yellow Book*, *The Chap Book*, *The Clack Book*, *The Lotus*, *The Philistine*, and Gellett Burgess's *Lark*, none of which Julie had ever heard of. Her light reading had gone no farther than the Victorian classics. She still believed, with Martha, that Browning was the last word in up-to-date poetry; that Stevenson was a gentleman but that Kipling was not; and that Henry James had gone astray, with continental moral laxness, in *What Masie Knew*. She kept these meager opinions to herself, however; and when the conversation moved on to the theater, she had no opinions at all. There was no theater in Findellen, and the nearest she had ever come to a New York stage was the concert hall of the Eden Musee. Her mother's religion had put a "holy curse" on the drama, and her father was as hostile to it as he was to all forms of

mental activity which seemed to him designed to prevent real thinking. She was, accordingly, as indifferent as posterity to Alan's contention that his mother's favorite Mansfield was only a "grease-paint actor," or that America had nothing of its own in the theater to offer the world except Weber and Fields. The names of Irving and Terry and Bernhardt were merely names to her; and when she was asked for her opinion of any of them, she answered truthfully, "I don't know."

Alice Carey was embarrassed by her own ignorance, and after advancing Richard Harding Davis as an example in the literary discussion, she retired in confusion. Not so Julie. She was oblivious to the claims of honorific culture, even when Alan came to discuss music and the young triumphs of Paderewski. Piano-playing was a schoolroom study for which recently she had had little time; the name of Beethoven ranked for her with the name of Euclid in academic distinction. She heard Alan on Paderewski, unconcerned; she was struck only by the confession that Mrs. Birdsall played very little because Alan found all music depressing except dance music.

She missed, in fact, the whole point of the conversation, which was this: all Alan's talk was what would now be called "a gesture" of his egotism. He was clever in argument because as soon as he was crossed in an opinion every faculty of his mind rallied desperately to the defense of his vanity. And he knew he was clever in argument, so he sought arguments in order to show his cleverness. He argued especially about the arts because he was æsthetically sensitive; but his admirations were never blindly enthusiastic. Whatever he liked he was impelled to seek a flaw in, out of a sort of jealousy: and hence he was by temperament a born critic. Being by disposition opposed to authority, he was a natural defender of anything new or unpopular, but it had to remain unpopular if it was to retain his support.

He was one of those who, as they say, talk in order to discover what they think —the truth being that he never knew what he thought until he had to expound a point of view in opposition to some other point of view which he accepted as a challenge to himself. Most of his objections to Hubbard, for example, were inspired by the fact that his mother admired Hubbard inordinately. He loved to talk art before Van Schoeck because Van Schoeck knew nothing whatever about it and cared less. He held forth throughout the meal for Julie's benefit, parading from books to plays and from plays to music in an attempt to engage her in a contest of wits. He threw Alice into disorder easily, but Julie remained intrenched behind her silence, and he maneuvered round her in vain.

He was no longer crudely egotistic. He had been polished by a rough contact with schoolmates. He had learned to protect his thin skin by the exercise of a mental agility that showed as humor, and he disarmed attack by making fun of himself as he closed with you. After he had you laughing at him he knifed you with his wit.

Most important of all, he had defeated and subdued his mother, and by that victory his ego had been as subtly fortified as a domineering husband's. He was no longer jealous. He had no longer any cause to be jealous. No guests except those whom he invited ever came into his home; his mother had no friends but his friends; she had no relations with the world except through him. And he, safely tyrannical behind the domestic moat and walls, let down the drawbridge only when he sallied forth to conquer the unprotected passer-by.

Alice surrendered without a struggle; that was plain enough before they had finished lunch. But Julie continued to maintain at least the appearance of unyielding independence. She insisted as they rose from the table that she must return to Martha; and she held to her resolve—though she did it pleasantly—when he proposed that they go for a

drive, that they all take a walk, that they have a dance, that she teach them to play chess and join with them in a tournament. Her resistance, of course, only made him more determined. When everything else failed he said, "All right. We'll wait for you. You go and make your sick call and we'll be here when you come back. By that time we'll have everything arranged for Alice with her mother. Leave it to me."

He walked with her to the Perrin's, attacking her with an endearing ardor. "It's great to be back," he said. "I'm going to make mother move right out here for the summer anyway. We've been knocking around so much—with strangers—I feel as if we were home again at last, among friends. I often wondered what you were doing. I felt that I'd been a frightful cad the way I'd behaved with you all. Did you forgive me?"

"Why, yes," she said, shyly. "There was nothing to forgive."

"Well, it's decent of you to say it. I'll bet Carey doesn't think so. Did he ever speak of me?"

"I don't see him very often," she evaded. "We used to play chess together but we've been too busy lately."

It satisfied him. "I like Alice. She hasn't really changed at all. Neither have you. Or if you have, you don't show it. You're just as much a mystery as ever. I was never able to make out what you were thinking. And I don't know now. What *are* you thinking?"

She answered truthfully enough, "I'm afraid I'm not thinking much of anything," and she laughed and blushed.

He embarrassed her by walking almost sideways with his face continually to her, in an attitude of exaggerated interest and fascinated attention. She found it a conspicuous way to behave on the street. The more she kept her eyes from him and gave him her profile, the more he edged round to make her look at him; and when she glanced at him—as she did with her confession that she was not thinking "much of anything"—she was struck full in the face with his smiling display of excitement and enthusiasm. It confused her.

"All right," he said. "I'll find out some day. And when you say to me, 'I used to think you were sort of silly,' I'll say, 'That's what you were thinking once when you said you weren't thinking much of anything.' Don't forget it, now. I want you to remember."

"Good-by," she put in hastily, stopping him at the Perrin gate.

"Not unless you promise to see us on your way back. Promise, or I'll sit on the front steps here waiting for you."

"I promise."

She all but ran as she hurried away.

It seemed as if her mind were calm enough about him; it was calm enough, at least, to contain a suspicion that his interest in her was partly affected and put on. But her heart was excited; it throbbed like a drum in her ears; and there was a lightness in her breast which made her breathe as if the air were rarified, in long suspirations that were almost sighs; and this lightness was somehow physically happy.

She went to the Perrin back door so as not to disturb the household with a ring, and then she stepped into her schoolroom to be alone for a moment before she faced Martha. Standing in the doorway, looking round that familiar scene of her past, with a hand pressed down on the unreasonable buoyancy in her breast, she had the eyes of a person who is seeing an unchanging environment that she is about to leave. It was almost the lingering and preoccupied look of a hasty farewell.

XXXI

Not that she was conscious of any change or new departure in her, or of any impulse to conceal the change from Martha. No. Her behavior was, as Cane might have said, purely instinctive—a behavior of the body in which the mind was scarcely involved. Or rather, it was as if her body were a

horse that she was riding, almost absent-mindedly, and this horse had become excited and uneasy at the sight of another animal in a field which they were passing; and she, tightening the rein and gripping with her knees, tried to continue along the road to her destination, undistracted.

So she rode, as it were, up the staircase and into Martha's room as if nothing had happened. She greeted the invalid with a reassuring affection and a kiss that was warmer than usual because her lips were unexpectedly hungry. "We played tennis," she said, "and had lunch." She did not explain what sort of tennis it was or try to put into words any of the impressions of the table talk. "She looks a lot older—Mrs. Birdsall. I think they're going to stay here for the summer."

"You'll like that," Martha probed.

Julie nodded. "So will Alice. He makes her laugh all the time."

She reached out a hand to her book on the bedside table—it was George Eliot's *Middlemarch*—and began to turn over the leaves to the chapter at which she had stopped reading. The action appeared wholly irrelevant but, as a matter of fact, it had seemed to her that Alan was somehow like Ladislaw in the novel, and she hoped dimly that the story might throw light on Alan's character.

"He has a nice man with him from New York," she said, "but I suppose *he*'ll only stay over Sunday."

Martha had accepted the book as an indication that Julie did not wish to talk about her young friends. "They were just in Rome, on their honeymoon, weren't they?" she suggested as Julie turned the pages.

"Here it is," Julie said. "Chapter twenty." She made Martha comfortable with pillows and found her crocheting. Then as she drew a chair to the bedside she began: "Two hours later, Dorothea was seated in an inner room or boudoir of a handsome apartment in the Via Sistina."

They had not been reading very long when they were interrupted by a summons for Julie to go to the telephone. She put down her book reluctantly enough. "I suppose it's Alice," she said: and Martha insisted, "You must go if they want you. You mustn't stay any longer."

"Why I've only just come," she protested, moving slowly to the door. She felt the impulse to hurry, but she checked it. She checked it until she was on the stairs, but there the horse rather bolted with her and she arrived at the telephone breathless. "Yes?"

"Listen," Alan said, in a low excited pleading tone that thrilled her. "I'm over at the Carey's. I can't get Alice away. They won't let her come without *you*, and Carey's snubbing me off the earth. You'll have to come—quick—and save me or I'll be frozen to death with cold looks. Really. I mean it. I'm coming over for you. You'll have to make your sick call some other day."

"But I've been here only a minute."

"It's nearly an hour. And it seems like a week. I'll die of exposure if you *don't*. Isn't it better to *prevent* sickness—pneumonia or something? Listen. Hear my teeth chatter—" And when she laughed at the gnashing sound he made—"I mean it. I'm coming right over. I might as well shiver myself to death on your doorstep. I'll sit there and shake the house till you come out. Good-by. Listen for me. I make a noise like castanets as I walk."

He hung up and left her smiling. She went smiling back upstairs to Martha. "They're having a terrible time," she said. "They're with Alice. And Mr. Carey has come home. And he won't let Alice go with them unless I'm there. I'm afraid I'll have to. He's coming here for me."

"Why of course!" Martha cried. "I couldn't think of letting you stay." She drew Julie to her and hugged her to the jealousy which ached in her breast. "You darling! I'm so glad."

It was the voice of sentimental con-

gratulation and Julie blushed, alarmed. "What for?"

"Oh, because they're young people," Martha fibbed, "and they like you and want you with them. It's so much better for you than poking round with invalids and old women." Her eyes were bright—with a film of tears.

Julie kissed her and felt inexplicably weak and trembling. "You mustn't talk like that," she whispered, "or I'll not go. You're—you're making too much of it."

"I know I am," Martha agreed. "I'm an old silly. But you're so sweet and so lovely. I like to think they all adore you."

"Oh, *please!*" She clung to Martha. "You mustn't—they're not—"

"Well, if they're not," Martha teased, "they're blind."

"Oh, *please!*"

"CAN'T YOU STOP AND TELL ME WHAT'S THE MATTER?"

It was as if Martha were betraying her into the agitation against which she had been struggling, and she pretended to be annoyed, scolding and slapping Martha's hand; but Martha persisted playfully, in a tender disguising of her jealousy, and the girl was out of countenance and visibly confused when she left the teasing finally and escaped downstairs to await Alan's arrival.

She intended to watch for him in the drawing-room window, but it occurred to her that this might involve unnecessary explanations if Miss Perrin saw her standing there; and she wished to be alone in order to recover her composure before she met him. For that reason she stepped out on the porch, closing the door softly behind her, and now she found herself conspicuous in the sunlight and as if guiltily waylaying him before he could ring the bell. That would be too absurd. She turned to go back but the door had locked. It flustered her. How silly! She would have to walk round the house and come in the back way. She started—and stopped. If they saw her they would wonder. More explanations! She turned again to wait for him on the porch and then she realized how foolish she must look, stopping and starting and turning first this way and then that way. She reddened angrily. What nonsense!

Nonsense indeed! Why wait for him at all? She might just as well walk to

the Carey's and meet him on the way. And with that she hurried down the steps and along the path toward the gate at such a pace that when she rounded the curve of the walk, among the bare lilac bushes, she almost ran into him before she saw him. She checked herself and tried to look composed but he had seen her haste—which looked like girlish eagerness—and her pretense of composure was contradicted by the suppressed excitement that showed in her high color and her self-conscious eyes.

She tried to explain, "I didn't wait—"

"You're an angel," he said. He took her hand and found it trembling. "It's awfully good of you not to treat me the way Carey does." His voice deepened. "You're wonderful. I don't deserve it." He drew her to him. "I've never forgotten how you—I've always remembered it. I was crazy about you. That's why I behaved so badly. I am still. You're such a darling."

At the first touch of his hand it was as if her physical strength had begun to dissolve out of her; and when he drew her to him she almost fell against him for support. She kept whispering "No, no," in an attempt to fight against him, but her body yielded weakly to the arm that he put round her, and when he tried to kiss her she was able to avoid it only by dropping her face against his shoulder. She shut her eyes, shuddering in a sort of clinging and delicious horror.

He whispered, "You're a darling. I've always—I've always loved you from the first time I saw you."

When she opened her eyes the sunshine was staring at her. Only a thin screen of leafless bushes concealed her in his arms from anyone who might be in the garden. "No, no," she said. "Not—not here—" and tried to draw away from him.

He kissed her on the cheek. "You're a dear. You're a darling. I'm crazy about you. I love you so much."

She was struggling against him. "*Please*. No, no. *Please*. They'll see us."

When he let her go she staggered away from him, putting her hand up to her burning face. She turned and stumbled toward the gate. He drew her arm through his with an air of protective possession, flattered by the emotion that had evidently overcome her, and caressing it indulgently with a tender tone of voice.

"All the time I've been away I've never met anyone—anywhere—like you. I've always thought of you and wondered about you, and no one else ever meant anything to me." He was, of course, exaggerating. "I used to think it was because you were an American girl, but when I got back here I knew it wasn't that. You're not like the American girls either—not like any *I* know, anyway. You're a darling."

He squeezed her arm against his ribs. She tried to withdraw it but he held it as if in a vise, smiling at her averted face. She felt as if he had given her wine and were still giving it to her. It had gone to her head and frightened her. She wanted to get away from him—from his touch and his voice and the intoxication that he kept forcing on her.

"I—I can't," she stammered when they came to the street and he turned her toward the Carey's. "I can't go there." She could not face them in this state. She pulled away from him and began to flee in the opposite direction, walking quickly, her head down.

He caught up to her at once and tried to take her arm again.

"No, no." She fought off his hand.

"What's the matter?"

"Leave me alone," she said, in a harsh, hoarse, uncertain voice.

"Why, what *is* it?" He was hurt.

She shook her head, hurrying as fast as she could. A strange sort of resentment had risen in her against him, against herself, against Martha.

"But, darling girl!" he cried. "You must tell me. I don't understand. Have I said something? Have I done some-

thing? What is it? You're not *angry* with me?"

She shook her head impatiently. Her face was pale and set. She was frowning at the road before her and walking at a furious pace.

"Well, *gosh!*" he said. It was impossible to be sentimental at that speed. She seemed to be trying to get away from him, and he was in the position of pursuing her—an undignified position. "If you won't tell me what's the matter what am I going to do?"

She did not answer.

They came to the end of the cement walk; the footpath in the roadside grass was only broad enough for one. He tried to keep beside her but it was rough walking; he stumbled and jolted himself. When he stubbed his toe against a hidden rock he burst out, "Well, for heaven's sake why *run?* It's so damn silly! Can't you stop and tell me what's the matter?"

"I don't," she said. "I'm not—"

He caught her arm and swung her round and held her. "You're not *what?* What's the matter with you? I never saw such a fool performance. I tell you I love you—that I'm crazy about you—and you act like *this!* What do you think you're trying to do?"

She looked at him. There was rage in his eyes and his mouth was cruel. It chilled her as if with a sort of frightened pity.

He jerked her to him and began to kiss her insolently. "You love me. You've always loved me. If you don't know what's the matter with you, I do." She had closed her eyes to shut out the sight of him. He mistook it for surrender. "You love me and you're too proud to *let* yourself. That's what's the matter with you. There's 'too much ego in your cosmos.' It's always been your trouble. That's why you behaved the way you did before. And you're not going to do it to me again. I love you and you love me, and I'm not going to have any nonsense about it." And then, as he softened at the touch of her lips—"You lovely, proud, silly thing—don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to love me. Let yourself go. I'll protect you. I'm mad about you."

She shook her head. "I don't—"

SHE STOOD AT BAY AGAINST THE TREE

"You don't *what?*"

"I don't know."

"You don't know *what?*"

In his exasperation he released her and she backed away from him till she struck a tree behind her. She stood against it at bay. "I don't want you to—to kiss me," she said.

They glared at each other like enemies for a moment, and then the absurdity of their position struck him and he began to grin. "Nonsense," he said. "How am I going to keep from kissing you? You can't be in love with a girl and not want to kiss her." She looked down at his feet, frowning. "What do you expect?"

"I don't want you to kiss me," she replied. And that was all he could get out of her.

They were under a pine tree whose fallen needles had killed the grass at its roots. "Listen," he said. "Sit down here. I want to talk to you." The ground looked warm and dry. He had a picture of himself with her in his arms "underneath the bough," pouring out a poetical flood of persuasive sentiment.

She shook her head. He tried to take her hand. She put it behind her. "No."

"What's the matter?"

No answer.

He was baffled. He had made what he considered an original discovery about women—"sweet, frail women," as he thought of them. Most of them could be stampeded very easily into a passionate emotion by a few caresses, an adoring phrase or two, a soft enunciation of the word "love." That word alone had a magic over them. They were such darlings. They all wanted so to be loved that you had only to look the part, to speak the word and they came as unresistingly into your possessive arms as Julie had. She loved him. She had always loved him. Yet here she stood defeated, drooping, with her back against a tree, still resisting him, staring painfully at the ground with her somber eyes and thinking—what?

"Listen," he said, "I'm sorry if I've done anything to offend you. I'm so fond of you I couldn't help myself. You know that. I've always felt that way about you." He was beginning to believe it. "And when I met you on the street I was so glad to see you that if Biddy hadn't been with me I'd've licked your hand and run barking up and down the road." He chuckled. "You mustn't be angry with me. I'm an awful fool, I know, but it's your own fault if I'm a fool about you. You know I love you, *don't* you? You must have known it—always. And if that's so what does all the rest matter?" He waited. "Please speak to me."

Her lips parted. She drew a long breath. She looked up slowly, as far as his smile, and then quickly down at the pine needles, which she began to brush aside with her foot until she had uncovered the bare earth.

He watched that operation amusedly.

"Well," he said, "if you can't tell me what's the matter, I'm just going to ignore it. It can't be anything very serious. I'm in love with you—and you know it—and that's the main thing. Come along now. They're waiting for us."

XXXII

No doubt she was in love with him. Certainly in the ordinary meaning of the words she was. He was "Alan"—"Alan Birdsall." The very name ran a soft warmth through her blood when she thought of it and the sight of him stampeded something in her that it seemed impossible to control. Moreover, she had a real affection for him—an affection that was made up of several warring sentiments, as most affections are, but still a deep and true affection. She was sorry for him because he was so nervously strained and sensitive, and yet these qualities in him were part of his charm for her. She was also a little afraid of him, as you might be afraid of a willful child that will hurt you and hurt itself if it be crossed. And she was by no

means ready to submit to him, if it was submission that his domineering love demanded. Her resentment against him and herself and Martha was based on that deep refusal to be overcome and handed to him, either by his demand or Martha's expectation or her own emotion that had first surrendered her to his embrace. In this sense he was right in saying that there was "too much ego" in her cosmos; but he was wrong if he thought that he could take that ego out of her by an insolent overriding of it, or by any such salutary brutality as he had used on her in his boyhood, or by the superior and smiling tolerance with which he treated her now. He might be foolish enough to think that love was a predatory relation between the sexes which added chiefly to the poetry and entertainment of life. She had sufficient instinctive sense to know that it was the essential stuff of which life and happiness were made. And she was in no mood to appreciate humor.

When he ordered "Come along now. They're waiting for us," he said it with a light authority which she obeyed because her mind was elsewhere; but when he preceded her on the footpath with some remark about showing her the way, she drew herself up and followed him with a slow independence that left him waiting for her when he came to the cement walk where they could go abreast.

"Pardon," he grinned, "if Fido trotted on ahead. Shall I bark for you?"

She understood only that he was laughing at her. She frowned and moved away from him without replying.

He fell into step beside her. "I talk too much, of course," he said. "And like everyone who talks too much, I say things that I don't mean. You silent people have a great advantage: you don't even say what you *do* mean. It makes me feel like a blind man playing checkers. I spend half my time trying to find out where you've moved."

It was evident from her expression of face that this sort of banter would get him nowhere with her. He changed his tactics. "Come out of the silences," he said, "long enough to help me with Carey, anyway. He's still as sore as bruises at me. He can't look at me without remembering the way I cheeked him—and hating me for it. I know I was an impossible young pup. And I'm surprised that nobody poisoned me. But he wasn't exactly innocent in that affair himself, and anyway, he gave me so much the worst of it that you'd think he could afford to forgive me now. After all, it was *his* revenge that has kept me from seeing you for seven years. You'd think that would satisfy him. I should think it *would* if he knew how much I liked seeing you. Perhaps I'd better tell him?"

She was at least sufficiently distracted from her resentment to become aware that her hat had been knocked askew in her encounter with him. She straightened it to face the Careys.

"Do you want a mirror?" He bent adoringly. "Look in my eyes. You'll never see yourself in a more flattering glass."

She reddened. "I don't like being made fun of."

"But, my darling," he pleaded, "I'm not making fun of you."

"You are," she said. "You've been making fun of me ever since—"

"Well, what am I to do? What am I to say? You seem to be angry at me, and you won't tell me why. And when I give up trying to find out why, and attempt to ignore it—and talk brightly about something else—you say I'm making fun of you."

"So you are."

"Listen, then," he cried. "I'll never be anything but serious with you as long as I live. It'll make my life one demned horrid grind, but I'll do it."

"You take a lot for granted," she said coldly.

"Of course I do." He threw out his hands in plaintive exasperation. "I have to. If you'll tell me *how much* I'm to take for granted, I'll take it and no

more. Tell me then! How much *am* I to take for granted?"

"You took a lot too much for granted when you—when you said—what you did—under that tree."

He knew that he had made a foolish speech "under that tree" and he had been trying to forget it. It annoyed him to have her refer to it. "You seem determined to force a quarrel with me," he said. "I don't know why. And it's darned silly. And I'm not going to let you do it." They had come to the Carey gate. "I've enough on my hands with this cursed lawyer. I can't afford to lose my temper now, and I'm not going to."

She made no reply, and they walked up the path toward the house, side by side in a malevolent silence. The Careys and Van Schoeck were in a group on the veranda. As Alan approached with Julie, Carey rose and spoke to his wife and retreated down the veranda to the French window into his study. Mrs. Carey followed him with an air which Alan understood. "Now comes the battle," he said. "Carey is about to issue his ultimatum."

He made a gay salute to Alice. "Well, here we are. It hasn't been easy, but we've arrived. 'Life is real; life is earnest.' Biddy thinks so, and *he* ought to know—he made it that way." This was a purely gratuitous jibe, authorized by his repressed ill temper. He grinned. "I think it might help if we all went over to our house and rolled my talented mother up against the piano and had a dance. What?"

"That would be lovely," Alice agreed with one lobe of her brain.

Van Schoeck was watching Julie, whom he had stood up to greet. He silently offered her his chair. She took it with a grateful glance that pleased him. Alan saw his pleasure.

"The *ayes* have it," Alan replied to Alice. "The lovely *ayes*. 'For the light that lies in woman's *ayes*'—if I had time I could work up something witty about the difference between her *ayes* and her *noes*."

They took it distractedly. They were thinking of the consultation in the study, and Alice at least was plainly apprehensive about it. She laughed and glanced at the study door.

"Thank you," Alan said. "A smile would have been enough. I think I might do better if I had a cup of my parent's tea. Tea and a dance! I wonder if we might invite your father to join us." And when Alice looked frightened at that threat of impertinence —"Oh, just to make the ceremony of joining us legal, you understand—legal as well as solemn. Why don't *you* go into law, Biddy?"

Van Schoeck cleared his throat for speech, but he got no farther. He looked at Julie. She said calmly, "I'm afraid I shouldn't stay. Saturday's such a busy day in the store. They'll need me."

Alan wakened with a horrified start. "Come along," he said hastily. "Don't let us wait. It would do us all good to show a little contempt of court. We're too blamed dutiful. These parents have to be kept in their places."

On top of this—to their embarrassment—Mrs. Carey arrived, a sudden apparition, looking white faced but determined. She had evidently not heard Alan; she was too perturbed to have heard. The others rose in a shocked silence at sight of her, but Alan took it all in his stride. "We're going over to my house to have a dance," he announced. "Come with us. It'll do you good."

She found Alice with her bravely painful eyes. "No. Run along and enjoy yourselves—all of you."

The girl was plainly reluctant to leave her in that state, but Alan overwhelmed the seriousness of the situation in a rattle of nonsensical chatter and carried Alice along with him, and drew the others after him with malicious gayety.

"Good-by," he called back to Mrs. Carey, when he had them on the path. "And say good-by to *Mr.* Carey for me!" He hurried off with Alice.

"IT'S AWFULLY DECENT OF YOU TO TAKE IT THAT WAY"

Julie followed moodily with Van Schoeck, who had ignored the whole scene in a blank reserve. As soon as they had turned away from the veranda he asked unexpectedly, "Do you work in a store—as well as teach school?"

"Yes," she said. "In my father's grocery store," and she gave it in as matter-of-fact a manner as possible, though she knew it might change his manner to her.

He accepted it inscrutably. After thinking it over he remarked, "It must be pretty hard work."

"Oh," she hastened to explain, "I help in the store only on Saturday nights. That's the busy time."

In her emotional depths she was still occupied with Alan, and she gave Van Schoeck only a surface attention. He said, "I've often wondered about working in a store. We used to play we had a shop when we were kids. We had a lot of sand and stuff in cans on a shelf. Is there really any fun in it?" And she did not notice that this was a significantly long speech for him to make.

"Well," she said, "I've always liked Saturday nights. They're so exciting."

"Are they? How?"

It was difficult to explain. They were rather like bad weather at sea. There was too much to be done—too many customers to be waited on; too many pay-day orders for groceries to be wrapped up and sent out for delivery; too pressing a danger that in the haste and confusion a mistake might deprive some one of his Sunday dinner. You were up till after midnight, working like a sailor in a storm. If you were a little girl you fell asleep finally on a sack of rice in the back of the shop, and were carried upstairs by your father after the excitement was all over and the doors were locked. It was somehow romantic and picturesque. She tried to say so without giving him the necessary details.

He listened solemnly. "That's why he called you 'Sugar Cane,'" he said. "Because of the grocery store?"

"Who? Oh, him!" She did not remember that Alan had spoken of it. "How did you know?"

"He said so just after I met you."

"Oh, did he?"

"My father," he volunteered with difficulty, "was a sugar refiner. The rest of the family were kind of uppish about it. They weren't in business, and my mother used to be ashamed of it. And at school my cousins started them all calling me 'The Sugar King,' to tease me."

It had no particular importance for her. The mention of Alan had plunged her into a confusion of disordered thoughts. She watched him ahead of her, turning into the Birdsall gate with Alice, gesticulating humorously. She would have to face him again in a few moments. She hung back, walking as slowly as possible.

"You haven't any brothers or sisters, have you?" Van Schoeck asked.

"No," she replied, mechanically. "Have you?"

"I had a sister. She was killed in a fire."

"Oh, that was too bad."

"They were all killed in a fire."

"What?" She came out of her preoccupation, shocked to realize what he had said.

"When I was away at boarding school—the house burned. It was one of those old brownstone houses on Forty-third street, without fire escapes."

"Your father?" she breathed, horrified. "And your mother too?"

"Yes," he said, reluctantly. "It's nothing. I mean—I don't know why I told you. It all happened years ago. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to—" He was as distressed by her concern as if he had been guilty of some shameful social error.

"But how terrible!" She was perhaps unconsciously trying to make amends to herself for the selfish thoughtlessness that had received word of such a calamity with a perfunctory "Oh, that was too bad!" She pressed the horror of it upon her remorseful imagination, shutting her eyes.

"No, no," he begged. "Don't think of it." They had stopped at the Birdsall gate. "I shouldn't have told you. It was—it was a long time ago, you know. I—"

"And you have nobody?" She searched his face in an agitated effort to understand and appreciate his tragedy.

"Why, yes—I've a lot of relatives, and—and friends. For—forgive me," he stammered, "for telling you."

"Forgive you!" she murmured. "*Thank* you for telling me."

She meant that by telling her he had explained his silence and his reserve, which she had been mistaking for stupidity. She meant, too, that she was silent and reserved herself because she was unhappy about Alan; and that she was glad to understand and sympathize with *him* because his silence and reserve were of the same sort. She felt as if she were about to weep. Her agitation of course was largely due to the ground swell of emotion—from the storm of her scene with Alan—that still shook her. She turned to conceal her expression from Van Schoeck and began to follow the others up the path.

"It's awfully decent of you to take it that way," he said in a low voice, much moved. "I don't know why I—I never speak of it, really."

"It isn't only that," she confessed. "I'm—I'm upset."

He asked with unexpected penetration: "About Alan?"

She nodded blindly.

"I'm sorry," he said with sincerity.

XXXIII

When they joined the others on the Birdsall veranda Alan had already demanded tea and his mother had gone to order it. They distributed themselves among the chairs and swings and cushions which furnished the place for the summer; and with the pause of silence that settled down on them they began one of those tedious congregations of absent minds that are the despair of human intercourse.

Alan's high spirits had suddenly ceased to flow. He sat empty, silent, and as if sulkily saying to himself: "You've refused all afternoon to be amused by me. Now, gol darn you, amuse yourselves. I've got other things to think of." And by the direction of his glances those other things pertained to Julie.

Alice was either watching him in an apprehensive helplessness or she was thinking that her father had declared she must not associate with Alan, and that her mother had defied him. Would her mother be able to hold out? And what should she herself do if her father stepped out from behind her mother and gave his orders direct? Life, in fact, was confronting her with the awful necessity of having an individuality of her own and asserting it. She turned to Alan for assistance, in her thought, and he seemed to have abandoned her. She worked her fingers nervously, and her lips kept forming and forgetting a faint resolution to speak or to smile.

Van Schoeck's long medieval countenance was only more set and uncommunicative than usual—his mouth tight, his eyes puckered either with speculation or with the western light into which he stared. The day had grown warmer; the heat had steamed up an April haze that made blue the hills beyond Findellen. When he turned his gaze from them he moved a silent scrutiny over the trees and grass and bushes until he found Julie sitting at the veranda edge with her back to the view. His eyes rested on her—as firmly as his hands rested on the arms of his chair—and then moved off reflectively again to the misted distances. As always, he seemed quite insensible of any social obligation to talk.

And Julie sat facing the white paint and clapboards of the house wall, with her mind focused on an invisible prospect as if the side of the house were the blankness of her immediate present and behind it immense events were gathering. She was grateful for the pause and the silence. And she might well be. For as it happened it was the pause of a wave that is about to break. All her past had flowed to the crest of a decisive crisis and now, poised motionless before it, three itself with a foaming crash into her future. And this was no less true for Alan, for Alice, and for Van Schoeck. Sitting there silent and preoccupied, they were no more than a row of corks on the summit of such a wave that held a moment, balanced and deadly still, before it toppled.

The pause lasted while Mrs. Birdsall returned and tried to talk to them. It held while tea was served and poured and passed round. Alan devoted himself nervously to cigarettes and repeated cups of strong Ceylon which he drank as if he needed the stimulant—refusing to answer questions except with an impatient movement of the head. His mother after an appraising glance ignored him, took the two girls indoors to consult with them about the curtains for the living room and, when she returned, gathered Van Schoeck into her party to make a tour of the garden in search of the first appearance of her spring bulbs.

Now that Alan had abdicated his social leadership she seemed more like a merely muted version of the woman whom Julie remembered as his mother. They came back to announce the renascence of the daffodils. Alan overlooked it.

She got out a book of garden photographs—snapshots that she had taken in Italy, in France, in England. The young people disguised their lack of interest in it as if it were the family album. Alice was fidgeting. "I think I'd better go," she said at last. "Mother —" she tried to smile apologetically, "Mother looked ill. I'm afraid she needs me."

Mrs. Birdsall could see that something had happened, though she did not know what. "I'm *so* sorry."

"Let me walk over with you," Van Schoeck volunteered.

Alan answered her good-by indifferently, rising but making no other effort to be polite. She went, dejected, to face the situation which he had forced on her and to which he now abandoned her.

He watched Van Schoeck and her till they were out of hearing. "I wish you wouldn't talk about the grocery store before *him*," he said to Julie. "He won't understand that sort of thing."

And the wave had begun to fall.

His mother looked at Julie. Julie turned to look at the cedar trees that hid the tennis court. She had the advantage of feeling that she understood Van Schoeck better than Alan did, and it showed in her face.

His mother misunderstood the expression. "You mustn't say such things to Julia," she remonstrated. "You have no right—"

"Yes, I have," he said. "I'm fond of her. And she's fond of me."

He said it sulkily, but that manner of announcing it only made it seem more serious and agreed upon. Mrs. Birdsall drew a deep, unhappy breath. "Oh, dear!"

"Besides, I'm only saying that if we introduce her to people like Van Schoeck I don't want her to jump up and say she can't stay any longer because it's Saturday afternoon and she has to work in a grocery store."

His mother wailed, "Oh, Alan, why *must* you say things like that when people are fond of you!"

Julie had not moved an eyelash.

"I'm not saying anything," he cried, exasperated. "I'm only asking her not to talk about it."

"You young—" His mother swallowed wrathfully the word "snob"— "You don't expect her to be ashamed of it!"

"Well" he glared—"she needn't be dragging it in all the time, as if she wanted to defy people with it."

Julie rose. "Father's been ill with a cold," she said. "I ought to be helping them."

"There she goes again," he cried.

"No, no," his mother begged, "Don't leave us like this. Alan, please apologize."

Alan grinned angrily.

"Don't go," she pleaded, her hand on Julie's arm. "I want to talk to you."

"*Talk* to her!" he jeered.

"Julia," she said in an agonized whisper, "it's important." Her lips moved as if she were trying to say something more but her voice did not come. It was less her words than her face that held Julie—the face of a deathbed request. The girl looked at her, frightened, and she tried to nod reassuringly and to smile. "I want to talk—" she gulped— "to talk to you. Please come."

"Talk to her!" Alan sneered to himself as they went indoors. "You might as well talk to a deaf horse."

Naturally he supposed that his mother was going to plead his cause and try to avert a quarrel that might make him unhappy. He relied on her. And he relied on his own ability to be irresistible when his ugly mood had passed. That was one reason why he yielded to these ugly moods: he had learned by experience that the person with whom he quarreled always found his boyish and humorous repentance delightfully

endearing. He felt better already. He lighted a fresh cigarette and shrugged his shoulders.

And his mother, having hurried Julie upstairs to a bedroom, shut the door and stood with her back to it and gasped, "You mustn't! You mustn't, Julia! Oh, *don't!* Don't do it!" She was excessively overwrought, with tears in her eyes, and she leaned against the door, holding the doorknob, as if some calamity were pursuing them and she was barring the way to it.

Julie blinked at her, pale. "I—I don't understand."

She caught Julie in her arms and held her. "Do you love him?" And when Julie did not answer, she shook her frantically. "Do you love him?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, *don't*, then. Don't!" she pleaded. "Not *you*. I wouldn't care if it were some of these others, but I can't let *you*. You couldn't—you couldn't be happy. You'd tear each others' hearts out. Oh, Julia dear! Don't do it." And clasping the girl to her, she began to weep on Julie's shoulder. "It's my fault, I know," she sobbed. "It must be my fault. No one else has had him. I don't know what I've done to him, but he's —he's cruel. He's terribly cruel. And I'm so fond of him—fonder than any of you could be—and it doesn't help. It doesn't help to love him—to yield to him. I've given up everybody—and everything—for him, and it doesn't help. And it doesn't help to fight him. He tears himself to pieces if you fight him. It's frightful. Oh, it's all frightful. I don't know what I'll do."

Julie took it stiffly. It seemed to her

SHE LEANED AGAINST THE DOOR AS IF SOME CALAMITY WERE PURSUING THEM

an excessive emotion, uncalled for and embarrassing. Perhaps, too, she sensed a certain jealousy in the mother's love that exaggerated Alan's faults. She said nothing. There was nothing for her to say.

Mrs. Birdsall controlled herself. "He's been better since he got away from me—to school," she said, wiping her eyes. "At first he was terribly unhappy. He fought everybody. I had to stay near him or I think he would have killed himself. But then he began to make friends. He began to get along better with people." She was leading Julie to a cushioned window seat against cretonne curtains. "And I thought it was going to be all right—that he was going to grow up and be different. And it *is* all right as long as it's anyone who doesn't *care* too much." She drew Julie down beside her, holding her hand. "I shouldn't tell you, I know," she said in another tone. "But I have to. You'd have to know some day. He has affairs with women—and—he's terrible to them. He doesn't seem to care how cruel he is."

She had been studying Julie's immobility with an anxious scrutiny which the girl evaded by keeping her eyes down. "Oh dear!" she cried. "I can't make you understand. You're too young." She clasped her hands and wrung them. "So was I. I was scarcely more than your age when he was born. I knew nothing—nothing. I must have made him what he is and I never knew it. As soon as I began to see I tried to change him. I tried to make him over. I did everything—I gave up everything—to undo it. And I can't. I can't. I can't change him. He's spoiled. He's ruined." She was sobbing again. "He has no—no—nothing! No ambition—except to amuse himself and torture people. No responsibility—about money—about anything he does. No affection—no real affection! No, no! Or he couldn't be so cruel. Oh, Julia, if you were just some weak-minded girl who'd yield to him in everything, perhaps it might be possible. You might get along together. But you're *not*. And if he's to marry, he'll have to marry some one with money—some one rich. He's useless—useless! He's spoiled. He's ruined. Oh, *don't*—don't let him marry you."

Julie started to rise. "I don't think—"

The mother caught her by the arm and held her. "He's fond of you. He loves you. He thinks he loves you. And he's sure you love him."

"I don't think he—"

"Yes! Yes, he does. Or he never would have dared to speak to you like that. I know him. And he'll make up. He'll be charming. Oh, when he wants to he can be a dear. He'll persuade you. He'll win you. If he makes up his mind to do it he'll win you."

Julie looked round the room, confusedly distressed, caged with this frantic emotion that seemed like some sort of indecency, exposing intimate feelings and private griefs and insisting upon stripping from her the reticence behind which she had hidden. She freed herself, revolted. "I can't," she said. "I can't talk about it." She got up.

Mrs. Birdsall sprang to her feet. "I'm not asking you to talk about it," she flamed. "I'm warning you. You'll have no friends—he'll not let you. If you so much as look at anyone but him he'll claw at you like a wildcat. He won't let you do—or be—or wear—anything he doesn't like. If you do he'll say terrible things to you—scandalous. He'll believe them. He'll nearly kill himself with them. Do you think *I* don't want any life of my own? Any friends but these—these children! Do you think *I like* to be nothing but an old—gray—just *his* mother—without a thought or a friend or an interest?"

Julie shook her head—deaf and staring as if she were trying not to see or to hear this tirade of resentment and jealousy and misery and affection. "I don't," she gasped. "I don't—" And then she caught sight of the door. Running to it in a panic, she threw it open and fled.

(To be continued)

THE LION'S MOUTH

POUNDS, SHILLINGS AND PENCE

BY PHILIP CURTISS

HERE'S news that will cheer the public. I've made up my mind to cancel the International Debt. It is quite a new point of view, even for me, as last week I believed that all the Allies should pay up. If Poland would only pay France, then France could pay England, England could pay us, and we could do away with the income tax—possibly even send a little relief back to Poland. It seemed quite as simple as the village in Maine where all the inhabitants lived by taking in one another's washing.

In the past week, however, I have got another and clearer view of the situation. As the Clinton twins used to say, there is more in this than meets the eye. If Wall Street and Washington will take my advice, they will say no more about foreign loans, for I personally have washed my hands of the whole blooming business.

My wife and my cousin Hairbut are responsible for my change of front and before I continue I had better explain that my wife, like my cousin, is English. She was a sweet little thing when I married her, two years ago, fresh off the boat, but it was not at all like most international marriages. I had no money and she had no title. In fact she brought me nothing except a Mayfair accent and a hopeless love for the Prince of Wales.

Nor is "Hairbut" the way that my cousin signs his name. It is merely the way he pronounces it. He arrived straight from London last Tuesday and, by what seemed a pretty coincidence, a copy of an English illustrated weekly on my study table was the first thing that met his eye.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, in pleasure. "Did you get this for me or do you have in the English reviews right along?"

"We have taken that one ever since the War," I replied. "Maude likes to look at the sporting prints and I like to read the advertisements of Haig & Haig."

"O-oh?" replied Herbert, suavely.

"Speaking of advertisements," he continued, a moment later, "I suppose that in this country I must be prepared to pay about twice what I should in London. Now they tell me that shirts—"

"In some things you will find prices very high," I answered glibly, "but in others you will be quite surprised."

To bear out my argument I picked up the magazine and began to run through the pages.

"For instance," I said, "take the matter of pipes. Now here is a brand of pipe—the 'Piccadilly Cantab'—for which I recently paid eight dollars in New York. The very same pipe is advertised in London for five shillings and six *pence*."

To my surprise a roar of laughter broke from both sides of the room. I looked up, rather nettled.

"Well, it *is* five shillings and six pence," I retorted. "Or, wait a minute. It couldn't possibly be five pounds and six shillings?"

I looked back at the page. Sure enough, there it was, a "5," then a slanted line, then a "6"—"Price 5/6." With my own hands I shoved the page before my wife's laughing eyes.

"Isn't that five shillings and six pence?" I demanded.

"Certainly it is," soothed my wife, "but it sounded funny to hear you say it. We should just say, 'Five and six.'"

"Say what you like," I retorted. "In any case it is a bargain for that kind of pipe. But now, on the other hand, look at tobacco. Over here you can buy almost any good brand at the rate of thirty-five cents for a three-and-a-half ounce package—about ten cents an ounce. In tobacco we've got you beaten to a standstill, for I notice that in England—"

To get at my figures, I went back to the magazine and found what I wanted at once, on the inside cover:

"Old Monks Tobacco. Full Flavored Leaf. Good Enough for Sir Walter Raleigh, Good Enough for You. In Three Ounce Tins for Tropical Climates. Price 3/3."

"There you are!" I exclaimed. "In England you see that the same sized package costs "three and three."

Again came the same roar and again I looked up.

"What's the matter now?" I demanded. "I said it just the way you did—'three and three.'"

"Not 'three and three,' Sweetheart," corrected my wife, "but 'three and thrippunce.'"

"But why," I demanded, "if you say 'five and six'—"

"I can't tell you why," laughed my wife. "We just do, that's all."

"Please go on," interrupted Herbert, diplomatically. "This is very entertaining."

I saw that it was. Nevertheless I continued.

"Now here is an American shaving stick," I began, "that is just about the same on both sides of the water—not meaning a joke. In America it costs twenty-five cents and in England it is advertised for —"

"For what?" asked Herbert, but I was not going to be caught again. The price of the stick *seemed* clear enough. It was printed "1/1" but when I started to say it, it seemed a bit tricky. Rather than commit myself to the spoken word I pointed it out with my finger.

"Read it yourselves," I suggested. "It's written 'one-one' and it looks to me like one shilling and one of those other things. But what do you *call* it when you walk into a shop? Do you say 'one and one punce,' or 'one shilling, one punce' or just 'one and one'?"

"We don't say any of those," laughed Herbert. "We say 'one and a penny.'"

"And if it were one shilling and *two* of those little jiggers, what would you call it then?" I demanded.

"'One and tuppunce,'" explained Herbert, gently.

"And one and three?" I persisted.

"'One and thrippunce.'"

"But one and four?' I pursued warily, for I had a feeling that the style of play was bound to change at any moment. "You wouldn't say 'one and fuppunce'?"

"No," answered Herbert, without a smile. "That's 'one and fourpunce.' But you're getting the swing of it."

For a moment I thought that I *was* and I forged ahead bravely.

"Then from now on," I asked, "you just play straight rules? Next 'one and fivepunce,' then 'one and sixpunce'?"

Again came the roar. "No, dear," expostulated my wife. "That's just what we tried to tell you. It's not 'one and sixpunce.' It's just 'one and six.'"

I shook my head and my eyes went back to the magazine which had fallen to the floor. As I picked it up, I saw this on the cover:

"Postage, Inland, 1d. Foreign, 1½d."

I was humble this time. Mutely I held out the inscription to my persecutors and asked them to read it. They looked at it without surprise and then looked at each other.

"What about it?" asked my wife.

"But how do you *say* it—out loud?" I argued. "I mean that little '1½d.'

Of course I know that '*d*' means pence, but do you say 'one and a half pence' or 'a penny and a half'?"

"But, dear old man," begged my wife, "it's 'three haypunce'!"

She must have seen a queer look in my eyes. "There's no reason to get angry," she pleaded.

But I was not angry. I was merely groggy. Perhaps, I thought, it might be simpler if we talked in big figures. It sometimes is, even in American money. I looked through the pages again to find something that cost a lot. I found it after a while in a big advertisement of Oriental rugs. It was there, plain enough—in print:

"Fine Persian, size 5 ft. by 3 ft., price £6. 8. 5."

"And what do you call that?" I demanded. "'Six pounds, eight, five'?"

"Almost," agreed Herbert. "You nearly got it. It's 'six pounds, eight and fivepunce.'"

"I think I see light," I replied, "now that we're talking in money of the size I'm used to handling. I really believe that you have a system after all. Now let me try another."

As a matter of fact, the rugs did offer an excellent school for a beginner. There were eight or ten sizes listed, one under another. I picked out the next, which was listed this way:

"£8. 10. 0."

"Now," I reasoned brightly, "if the one above it is 'six pounds, eight and fivepunce,' this one must be 'eight pounds, ten and nuppunce.'"

I had held the magazine behind me while I gave that figure and for a moment I thought I had floored them. From neither my wife nor my cousin came any answer.

"Please say that again," asked Herbert, slowly.

With growing triumph I repeated and then held it before their eyes, just as it was printed—"£8. 10. 0."

Immediately both laughed. "Why, no, you poor ass," said Herbert. "Can't you see? That's merely eight and a half pounds?"

"The system's crooked!" I retorted hotly. "But just look at the next rug below. The price is '£12. 12. 0.' You can't tell even me that *twelve* shillings are half a pound. What I'm trying to get at is this: What do you say when the pence column is zero?"

Again they wavered until I showed them the price itself, in print—"£12. 12. 0."

For answer I got nothing but that same idiotic laugh. My wife must have thought that I was going to burst into tears, for she came to my rescue.

"But, dearie," she said, "can't you see? That's merely twelve guineas!"

"What is?" I grunted.

"The whole thing. A guinea is a shilling more than a pound. So twelve pounds and twelve shillings is another way of saying twelve guineas."

"It's a hell of a way," I retorted. "If they feel expensive and want to talk guineas why don't they *say* guineas?"

"Sometimes they do," replied Herbert. "If you look on through those pages I've no doubt you'll see a price in guineas printed out in words."

And Herbert was right for, as with listless hands I continued to turn the pages, I ran right into a motor car labeled "500 Guineas," but on the next page was even a better car priced at "£525," which figured out at just the same thing.

By this time my wife and Herbert had tired of the game and their conversation had wandered to other subjects. Yet from time to time, like the bulldog that I am, I continued to break into their happiness.

"Now tell me this," I suddenly sputtered. "If your damned old rugs are priced at ten pounds and nine shillings, why is this overcoat on the next page advertised at '130 Shillings'?"

With my last ounce of strength I took out a pencil and began to figure on the margin of the magazine.

"If they thought the coat was worth

all that money—which I don't believe it is," I persisted, "why didn't they come out like men and call it six pounds and ten shillings—or, if you *will* have it that way, six and a half pounds? In England do they not only want you to buy their old goods but keep their books as well?"

Herbert shrugged his shoulders. Clothing frequently *is* priced that way—simply in shillings. If you will look along you will probably find that whisky is advertised in pounds, shillings, and pence; port and claret in shillings alone, and champagne in guineas."

"A pound income and a guinea appetite?" I suggested. That joke made me feel a little better, and I left them alone for quite a few minutes until suddenly I came on an absolute knockout. I gave a wild yell.

"Listen here—both of you!" I ordered. "I'll bet you a farthing, a pound, and three pieces-of-eight that neither one of you can do this in your heads: Here is a motor lawn mower that will be delivered right at your door in any part of England, Scotland, or Wales for 29½ guineas. There are the figures. Look at them with your own eyes. It is printed right out—'29½ Guineas.' I'll give you ten seconds. Now tell me quick. How much would that lawn mower cost you in pounds, shillings, and pence?"

At that shot my wife did begin to look troubled, but Herbert, the man of affairs, never batted an eyelash.

"Why, no," he replied. "It's very simple. Twenty-nine and a half guineas are twenty-nine pounds plus twenty-nine shillings plus ten and six! You can figure it out for yourself."

"Not me," I replied. "Rather than that I'd mow all summer by hand."

I couldn't help feeling that I had made more or less of a comeback, and Herbert must have felt so too, for very shortly he asked if he might go to bed. Not that he was tired, of course, but after all he had had a long trip. Besides, he said, it was always his custom to read for an hour before he put out the light.

At the time I didn't believe him. I thought he was merely running away like a coward for fear of what I might ask him next, but, half an hour later when I myself went up to bed, I noticed a ribbon of light under his door, and, going in, found him propped up in bed with a book in his hand. At the sight of me his face brightened oddly.

"Oh, hello!" he exclaimed, "I've been waiting for you. You see, I thought I'd begin my visit by reading one of your own books. It's a bully story, but won't you please explain this passage? Where is it? Oh, yes, here it is."

Completely unsuspecting, I took the book from his hand, and Herbert's finger pointed out the following paragraphs:

> As the ragged stranger took up his cards, he emptied a handful of small coins on the table—coppers, nickels, quarters, and dimes.
>
> "Open her for six bits," he muttered.
>
> From the dealer's chair, the sheriff glanced at his pile of coins with a look of contempt.
>
> "Take that chicken feed off this board," he commanded. "Nothing but 'presidents' go in this game."
>
> The stranger hesitated, then, with a queer look in his eyes he drew out a wad of jack as big as a drainpipe. Long green it was mostly, but I could see one or two yellowboys gleaming among it.
>
> "How much to open?" he asked. "One simoleon?"
>
> "Five beans, nothing less," reotrted the sheriff, and as the stranger peeled off a V, the sheriff tossed down a big double-eagle.
>
> "I'll leave it all there," he waved grandly. "I'm meaning to jump her fifty berries each shot; so, Stranger, you'd better get ready to answer in centuries."

"Now will you please tell me," began Herbert eagerly, but with a shamed smile I gave the book back. I thought it over a moment, then suddenly, like a man and an Ally, I held out my hand.

"*Pax*, Herbert?" I suggested, wistfully.

He took my hand and answered me —"*Pax*."

THE PARTIAL POST

BY MARIAN STORM

THE line at the window was growing longer, and the old lady decided to speak frankly.

"Well, I can certainly tell you what's in it, if you're so keen on knowing," she said. "There's two sheets, not absolutely worn out, but with holes big enough to put your toes through, in case you're a restless sleeper, and my daughter says she never can get enough rags, with the girl throwing them away after she's used them once, the way they do now, and that honestly she'd like a nice supply of rags for her birthday as well as anything. Rolled inside the sheets are some shirt tails, plenty good enough for dusters, and then inside of those—I thought it would be such a fine chance to pack it—is a small bottle of blackberry brandy—"

The clerk's face lighted. "That's against," he exclaimed, and then asked meditatively, "Did you want it insured?" But his civic sense wrecked such a train of thought. "We can't accept exhilarating beverages, madam. In fact, you had better take it right back home."

The old lady was about to discuss the package more fully, but the next in line pressed on.

"Insured for ten, please."

"What's in it?"

"A gift."

"What kind of a gift?"

"Wearing apparel."

"How classified?"

"Oh, it's just a *robe de nuit*."

"Robe de what?"

"I'll spell it for you: R-o-b-e—*robe;* d-e-n-n-u-i-e—*de nuit*."

"Here's your slip. Next."

A long package, very much like an umbrella, is shoved under the grating. The clerk can just see the tilted freckled nose belonging to its sponsor.

"What's the contents?"

"One shipment."

"Shipment of which?"

"Live Stock."

"Look here, kid, what have you got in this box? What are all these holes cut along the top for? You can't send this by mail. Great suffering Cæsar, take it back! I see his eyes."

"Aw, Gee, go on and take it. Red wants a black snake. They can't keep nothin' in their apartment that takes up room. I tole Red, I says, 'I'll send you a snake. He can fit in anywheres. Yer mother won't kick at a snake, even if she won't let you have a pup.' And Red says, 'Gee, will ya mail it to me?' So I caught this ole feller yesterday, and I found an umbrella box, and it was just right for him, and—"

"Take him off quick," urged the clerk through the little hole in the closed window. "Get a nice firm snake skin this August and stuff it. Carry the package gently, that's a good boy."

He passed a hand across his brow.

"Contents?"

"Just some things my wife asked me to get—A teddy, a middie, a brazier, a libretto, a jar of mud, an invisible, a transformation, a combination, a half-in-half. . . ."

"All right; sixteen cents. What's in it, madam?"

"I simply cannot tell you. There is no reason why you should know."

"Lady, you simply will have to tell me or we cannot accept it for the mails."

"Well, it contains an intimacy."

"Is it perishable?"

"Yes. Insure it for five dollars, please."

"This parcel," I told him, for my turn had come, "enfolds a blouse which I really hate and which I am mailing to my sister, who is fully informed of my attitude. Within the blouse is a wonderfully silly book that I do not care to have around the house, and neither would she, but she has a furnace. This is the only method I have of disposing of these two articles, and I wouldn't have them insured for anything. After all, why do you keep on asking us? You bring it upon yourself."

"Lady," said the clerk, "it is my lawful entertainment."

AS THE CROW FLIES

BY LAURA SPENCER PORTOR

SO many miles by foot; but so many —less, a great deal less—"as the crow flies."

The crow has always stood to me as a kind of symbol of a fine economy of the intellect, a swift efficiency of the spirit. While we landlubbers plod the weary winding roads of our contradictory experience, he goes straight along the short-cuts of the air, arriving at his destination as wise men at their conclusions, without waste of argument or dissipation of opinion.

He is above all—and I believe I like him most for this—nothing of a bigot. I know of no other bird so observant without prejudice; so ready, really, to suit himself to circumstance and adjust himself amicably to conditions. He is more willing than any person I know to give the devil his due, even if the devil be a river. I have seen him coming up from a plunge with a fish in his claws like any kingfisher; and you can hardly say more as to generosity and adaptability than that of one who by nature prefers the highest, dryest, topmost bough.

It seems certain he must have speculated about us a great deal, forgiven us much, and laughed at us not a little. I have always had the impression he would be extremely good friends with us except for that miserable moot question of the farmer's corn. If only one could ever give in to the other!

But even so, he never seems to me unfriendly as he flies over broad acres. The very sweep of his wing, so leisured yet steady, has always something amicable in it when I compare it with the busy, rather crafty flitting of small birds, bent so absorbedly on their own affairs, or the sinister sailing of the hawk that hovers waiting its chance to pounce when you are not aware.

No, the crow as he goes his slow way, cawing, may make sarcastic or humorous comment upon us but he does not stoop to deceive us. It is we, rather, who deceive him, and set up scarecrows, made so unflatteringly in our own image, that he may suppose we are abroad faithfully, industriously, hour after hour in our gardens when we are lazily not there at all. Nor is it his sagacity, I believe, that fails him when he does not discover the deception; it seems to me only that he is too much of an openhearted person himself to suspect us of such duplicity—he who goes straight to a point, and so directly that we have put his directness into phrase and symbol—"as the crow flies."

Though it is the dove, owing to that bit of olive branch, that has received all the glory, I have noted in Genesis that it was the "raven"—which is to all intents and purposes the crow—that was first sent forth after the floods had abated on an embassy and commission of inquiry; and it was to birds of the same tactful and trustworthy family that the bread and meat destined for Elijah the Tishbite were intrusted; nor is it reported that the rations were diminished on their delivery.

In short, I have a respect amounting to downright fondness for a creature of so much intelligence and adaptability.

"It is an existence, but not a life," says old Montaigne, "to be tied and bound by necessity to only one course. The goodliest minds are those that have most variety and pliableness in them."

There is a great deal of all this in the crow. I think he might even be called the very Montaigne of birds—interested in all things, peevishly bound to none.

So many miles by foot! and it is a weary way; but not "as the crow flies." Above the plodding of the daily practical tasks the intelligence goes winging, winging, straight to its point.

I have traveled a long road to-day; and have been directed by many guideposts, and have arrived at my destination, God knows, body-weary; yet—as the crow flies—the way has not been long.

EDITOR'S EASY CHAIR

WHAT AILS CONTEMPORARY LIFE?

BY EDWARD S. MARTIN

NOW and then something comes along in the news that jolts people. So it was when a great liner was sunk some years ago. To be sure that was a vast catastrophe, but the impression it made was greater than even its vastness warranted. The number of the drowned was great, sixteen hundred or thereabouts; many of them were very well-known people and that made a difference; but for months and years together in the War more people than that were killed over night, day in and day out, so it was not merely the number or quality of the dead which made the sensation. It was as though civilization had got a black eye. That was at the bottom of the feeling that prevailed.

There is something of the same quality in the story that broke out in the front headlines of the papers of June 1st of the two Chicago boys who had murdered their young companion. Rich boys they were, or the sons, at least, of very rich people; mentally clever; high scholars in the universities they had been to. Nobody that reads anything can have missed the details of that story in the papers nor can yet have forgotten them. It jolted people very much. Scripture says, "The love of money is the root of all evil." We see the point of that, but still are apt to think of money as the great cure-all. Ask the farmers if it is not! Ask the bonus men! But those boys had money; they had plenty. The immediate motive for the murder was to get more money, at least it seemed to be, but it was not at all a pinching motive, for those boys had money enough even for extravagance.

Education is lauded as the great panacea for all evils. But those boys were "educated," and good at it. That must have been what shocked people. Here were the two great popular remedies for the ills of life coming complete and awful croppers—money failing to appease; education, so called, failing to direct, and the boys upon whom these blessings had been lavished for years suddenly discovering themselves as murderous monsters, destitute of moral sense, degenerates, anything you like, and carefully equipped to excel in crime.

We all know how crimes of violence abound just now. The murder rate in this country has doubled, Dr. Frederick Hoffman tells us, in twenty-four years. Doctor Hoffman is statistician for a life insurance company, and keeps the run of such matters as murder. He says our foreign-born population does not do much killing and is comparatively orderly. About the next generation of that population he does not say. The foreign-born come here with habits formed by the restraints of the countries they come from. What restraints their children find here, what sort of teaching, how much religion, what sort of moral influence does not appear in Doctor Hoffman's statistics. If we think we find a large proportion of Italian names in the stories of violence in the New York papers, that seems to mean something,

but Doctor Hoffman does not deal with that. He finds the homicide record is greatest in the South and is related to negro populations. The highest rate of all is, as it has long been, in Memphis—more than sixty annual killings in every 10,000 population, whereas in New York the ratio is only about 5.5 for each 10,000. Whatever the cause, Doctor Hoffman shows that the homicide rate in the United States is scandalously high and apparently increasing, and of course one asks why? Here comes this appalling story of these rich Chicago boys developing into murderous monsters, and again one asks why?

Their case with its extraordinary features came before the American Psychiatric Association then in session in Atlantic City. The business of the psychiatrists is to understand the mind and its diseases, and of course the Chicago story was proper meat for them. How these boys came to be what they were and do what they did naturally became a topic of discussion at that meeting, but was used mainly as an example of what was happening in the United States. Doctor Barker of Johns Hopkins pleaded for an awakening of the public mind to the prevalence of mental disorder and the need of efforts toward prevention of insanity, as against satisfaction with the present methods of incarceration and treatment.

Another psychiatrist, Doctor Cowles, declared—not at Atlantic City but in a newspaper interview—that Leopold of the Chicago pair had *dementia præcox* which might, he said, have been easily cured if taken in time; and that Loeb, the other one, was obviously controlled by him. Every year, said Doctor Cowles, according to the interview, "we send some 240,000 persons suffering from mental derangements to insane asylums and private sanatoria. An astounding figure! And a shameful figure when it is realized that 80 per cent of those hopeless people could have been cured had the state done its simple duty."

And what remedy did he recommend, calling it easy and inexpensive compared with the cost of insanity. He would have "a thorough physical examination of every child in the schools of the United States. Not such a cursory examination as is conducted now, but the fullest clinical investigation of each child's physiology, with proper laboratory analyses. Upon the basis of the physical report a mental examination should be made by competent psychiatrists. These examinations should be repeated periodically. They would be comparatively simple after the first, their chief object being to detect variations and tendencies in mental and physical development." By so doing, he thought, incipient insanity could be cured while still curable, and potential criminals either straightened out or segregated. The obstacle he found to setting up this system was the lack of competent psychiatrists. At present he believed there was only a handful of men prepared to do the work, but that he considered the fault of the medical schools, and thought psychiatrists could be trained in due numbers if there was opportunity for them to work.

Is it really so bad as that? Are we going crazy so fast and in such numbers that all the school children should be carefully examined to see if they are sane? That seems to offer us a rather bleak prospect. But here is the story of the Chicago boys, and the daily score of crimes of violence all over the country, and the homicide record, the highest in what we call the civilized world. What is the matter? Is the strain of life too great? Do we have to think about too many things? Is society too highly organized? Have we got too many machines?

And what is the state of religion? One of the offices of religion is to keep people sane. Nothing else is so good at it, but now in this country it does not seem to be handling the job. My friend Theophilus Broadhead, who is still on

the windward side of middle life, says that the need of the times is "to put religion into religion." That is what he tells me when I talk about religion as a power to save the world. He cannot see it. He is pious himself, in moderation, and well instructed. I think he approves of religion, "but what," he says, "am I to *do*?" He sees the Fundamentalists and the Modernists forever discussing theology, and it does not look to him as though they were getting anywhere. In religion, as he sees it, he does not find the power which will save the world, and yet he suspects that it ought to be there, and that is why he storms out his demand to put religion into religion.

It is a difficult demand. There is a great deal of religion in this country now. There is an extraordinary amount of devotion to all work that promises to improve the condition of the people. There is a vast amount of religious belief of one sort or another floating about, some of it organized, a good deal not. The reason why prohibition went through was the belief of millions of people, mostly religious people, that it was the great panacea for improving the morals of the country. President Butler says it is not doing so, but quite the contrary. This Chicago story, the hold-up record, the homicide record, all impair confidence that shutting off rum is going to save the country even if it can be accomplished, which it probably can't. And there will be many who will not even accept the suggestion that the development in training of a sufficient number of competent psychiatrists and the examination of all the school children will quite accomplish our national salvation. What one would like to have is an explanation why the children should need to be examined; why we send a quarter of a million people a year to insane asylums; what is the matter with current life that so many people break down under it!

Is it too complicated and expensive? Many of us think so. Farming is badly off and that is one of the most soothing of callings, but it is only soothing when it is in a fairly good case and people can make a living by it. When a year's work brings the farmer a deficit and an increased mortgage, probably it is not soothing. Everything is done in this country to stimulate manufactures and to multiply the conveniences of life. We have good roads and plumbing and electric lights and telephones and motor cars and radios and airplanes and Heaven knows what else, but they are all expensive, and to keep them in repair and going keeps most people's fiscal capacity on the stretch. This life we lead is not an easy life. This religion that we lean on is a splendid subject for controversy in the newspapers, but it does not seem to support our souls as much as they need. We do not know enough about the life we live or the world we live in. We know only the visible world, only the practical life, and by no means the whole of them. But of the invisible world and the spiritual life our knowledge seems far short of our requirements. Somehow we must increase it. Somehow, if we are not to go crazy in increasing numbers, we must meet the demand of Theophilus Broadhead and put religion into religion.

After all, that is only another way of expressing what people have in their minds when they say the world, or this or that nation, or this or that group needs to have the fear of God put into it. When the need becomes sufficiently urgent and the authorities of one sort or another seem unable to meet it, in resourceful countries it usually happens that amateurs rise up and take a hand and do what they can to meet the situation. So it was in California following '49, so it is now in Italy and more or less in other states of Europe, and one hears of a growing Fascisti organization in England that is getting ready to take hold whenever, if ever, the call comes with power enough. The spirit that would foster such an association in England may be represented here in a way

by the Ku Klux Klan, but who would have the Klan or anything much like it attempt to do in this country what Mussolini and his men have done in Italy? We like not that method on a large scale, quite capable though we are of vigilance committees to meet emergencies. Neither would a Fascisti organized in England be likely to do any such work as Mussolini has done in Italy! It might transpire as a big *posse comitatus* to enforce order or break unreasonable strikes, but hardly more than that.

But both in England and in this country, party government is in trouble. No single party has a majority in England, and here the party in power cannot pass its bills. We all know how the Republicans are divided and what effect their division has in Congress. The Democrats are thought to be under better discipline and more coherent, but it will be four years next March since they have been tried out. It used to be that platforms meant a little something and that a party whose management of the government had not been satisfactory could be turned out and the other party put in charge with power to act, but now it seems doubtful whether the Republicans will have power to act if they are continued in office, and not at all certain that the Democrats will have it if they are chosen. That is the sort of situation in politics that favors the organization of amateurs to get political results. The prohibitionists have shown what they can do, and the bonus men seemed to profit by that example, and the farmers seem inclined to try it.

And now for three months of discussion, following which we may possibly know more than we do now! Maybe it is going to be an interesting campaign. Writing before both the conventions have nominated it is hard to say, but certainly there is a great need to talk things over, get our bearings, try to discover where we are and whither going, and what to do about it if we are not heading right. Mere politics won't save us. A political party is just like a motor car: whether it gets anywhere depends on the competence of the driver. It is the same with Congress. Congress is a good enough machine but somebody has to handle it. No doubt that is true of all organizations, the Church included.

The writer of a letter to the Easy Chair says: "We ought not to try to formulate religion but allow it to formulate us and reach others, if through us, nevertheless not by our assistance, and then most when we are perhaps silent." How far that applies to politics is hard to say, but politics has had plenty of noise lately, enormous clamors of it, and has not been going any too well; the notion that silence may help it is rather welcome. This much at least there is in it: there must be a lot of voters not active on the stump, not speakers at meetings, who may gradually get through their heads what is going on in politics, what they think about it and what they want done. Then if some candidate is offered who suits them, something may happen. What we are warned is not unlikely to happen is that the impotence of the two great parties, and their inability between them to express the aspirations of all the voters, may result in a third party that will carry states enough to throw the election into the House.

But whatever works out of the elections, we shall have on our hands in November and after the same problems as now, and the same need to know why so many of us every year go to asylums for mental treatment, and why crimes of violence and homicide abound so, especially among the young. Our world needs something to shape conduct. Science tries to do it, but it does not succeed. There must be something else, and possibly it will come by putting religion into religion, though that is not a feat that can be accomplished by main strength, or even by organization and bloc politics.

EDITOR'S DRAWER

THE OLD, OLD QUARREL

BY BURGES JOHNSON

"WHERE'VE you been?" asked Head.

"Away for a short vacation," said Heart.

"Well, I hope you're ready for work," said Head.

"Certainly," said Heart.

"Are you all here?" asked Head suspiciously.

"All of me that you need for your purposes."

"But you look frazzled, and I think there's a piece gone," persisted Head.

"That's all right. You shouldn't complain. You'll find me fit for business."

"But where's that piece? I want all of you!"

"She's got it," said Heart.

"Who's she?"

"Oh, you know perfectly well," said Heart; "you like her yourself."

"True," said Head; "I admit I know her and she has certain admirable qualities."

"Admirable! Bosh! That's not the word for her! She calls for more than that, you cold-blooded old coconut."

"Just the same, I can't have you leaving pieces of yourself round anywhere, especially at this critical time in our career."

"Why can't I? She'll give it back if she doesn't want it. Maybe her own head will make her give it up. These heads of ours are such poor fools at times."

"Stuff! We'd be perfectly sane without you. Everyone knows how likely you are to run off and lose us, under certain circumstances. Your job, for instance, right now is with me. You know I need you in my business. I can't think of marrying."

"Who said anything about marriage? And didn't I punch the time clock on the minute this morning, and don't you find me right here waiting for you?"

"I'm not so sure," said Head; "I don't like your looks. We've been working together cheerfully for so long now, with no one coming between us. I can't afford to let you run amuck."

"Don't worry, old man; I'll always be with you in business hours."

"I don't know about that," said Head, shaking itself doubtfully; "you've been beating out of tempo lately, Old Pump."

"Is that any of your business?" said Heart a bit testily. "If you get all of me that you need for your regular purposes, can't you let me attend to my own affairs out of hours?"

"Sounds well enough. Sort of not letting your right ventricle know what your left ventricle is doing, you mean? All right at the start, but where shall we end?"

"That's up to you, old man," said Heart grinning. "You're so much older than I am, you ought to be able to control me."

"But suppose I am nodding?"

"Ah, that's my chance. And I hope you nod often."

"But suppose I get drawn in? What's going to become of all my singleness of purpose?"

"Come on in! The water's fine."

"You're incorrigible!" said Head. "I don't recognize you. What's got into you?"

"She has," said Heart. "She's the dearest—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Head.

"Certainly, sir," said Heart. "I didn't start this."

"Yes, you did. And you've spoiled some good working hours, and I can see you're likely to spoil a lot more."

"Then you'd better come round. After all, I'm stronger than you."

"We'll see about that!" said Head.

"Yes, we'll see!" laughed Heart.

An Early Record

Sandy MacFang makes the ninth hole in a "birdie" 43

By Request

A GROUCHY individual who was dining at the table nearest the orchestra arose from his chair and approached the leader.

"Do you," he asked, "ever play by request?"

"Certainly, sir," replied the delighted musician.

"Then," said the grouchy diner, "I wonder if you and your men would be so good as to play a game of pinochle until I have finished my dinner?"

Shifting the Responsibility

LITTLE Dora had just received a bright new dime and was starting out to invest it in candy, when the minister, who chanced to be calling at the time, asked:

"Why don't you give your money to the missionaries, Dora?"

"I thought about that," replied the child, "but I think I will buy the candy and let the candy man give the money to the missionaries."

A Big-Game Mystery

LITTLE Tom and his father were calling on a big-game hunter, and Tom had been put on the floor to play with a tiger-skin rug. He interrupted his elders' conversation with so many questions that finally the hunter took Tom on his lap and told about the tiger hunt. Tom returned to the rug, examined it with renewed interest and then inquired, "How did you shoot it so flat?"

Past Performances

Robert Fulton discovers the steamboat

PERSONAL AND OTHERWISE

THE Judges of the Harper Short Story Contest, Meredith Nicholson, Zona Gale, and Bliss Perry, awarded to "The Girl in the Tree" the First Prize of $1,250 for the best story submitted in the first competition, which closed on March 31. They did not know who had written it, for the stories forwarded to them by the Editors were all in galley proofs without the authors' names. The author of "The Girl in the Tree" proved to be not a newcomer to fiction, but ***Alice Brown*** of Boston, who has a long list of novels and volumes of short stories to her credit, and may fairly be said to have established the prize-winning habit, since in 1915 she won Winthrop Ames's ten-thousand-dollar play competition with "Children of Earth." It is a pleasure to open this issue of the Magazine with the story selected by the Judges as the most distinguished among more than three thousand submitted during the competition. "Loutré," by Lisa Ysaye Tarleau, which won Second Prize, will be published next month, and "Women Come to Judgment," by Margaret Culkin Banning, the Third Prize winner, in October.

Articles of protest are sometimes justified, and we expect that thousands of readers will feel that ***Frederick Palmer,*** in his outburst of wrath at the Fats, has expressed their own resentment with emphatic finality. Mr. Palmer is an author and correspondent of wide experience who has observed many a military campaign for American newspapers and press associations, and during the World War served as a lieutenant-colonel with the A. E. F.

Two more stories follow Mr. Palmer's denunciation of unlovely American traits: "The Weather Breeder," by ***Merrill Denison,*** a new writer from the Province of Ontario, who won honorable mention in the first competition of the Contest, and "'Lijah," by ***Edgar Valentine Smith.*** This seems to be prize-winners' month, for Mr. Smith was recently honored with the O. Henry Memorial Award for the best American short story of 1923 ("Prelude," published in HARPER'S a little over a year ago).

People have been discussing the younger generation for some years now, but to the best of our knowledge ***Alexander Black's*** article is the first discussion of the youngest generation and what it will probably be like. Mr. Black, although he is a veteran New York newspaper man, is most widely known as the author of *The Great Desire* and other novels, the most recent of which is *Jo Ellen*. We should like to be able to hear all the arguments which his paper will provoke.

Susan Ertz, the author of "Trumpery," is an Englishwoman and therefore ineligible for our prize awards. But she is a writer of great ability: her novel, *Madame Claire,* published a few months ago, was one of the most successful of the season.

Say what you will about the younger—or the youngest—generation, it is all right in the circus, according to ***Sarah Comstock;*** and we can testify not only that she is experienced as a novelist, journalist, and writer of special articles for the women's magazines, but that she knows the big tent from the inside out.

Basil King, author of *The Conquest of Fear* and of many a charming novel from *The Inner Shrine* to *The Happy Isles,* contributes this month the second of his Bible articles, in which he looks at some of the fundamental questions of modern religion from an individual and personal point of view. ❦ ❦ ***Gamaliel Bradford,*** the analyst of *Damaged Souls,* hangs a portrait of one of the greatest French novelists in his new gallery of "Bare Souls" who have revealed their true natures in their correspondence. ❦ ❦ ***H. M. Tomlinson,*** formerly of the London

Nation, in the exquisite prose of which he revealed his mastery in that all-too-little-known book, *The Sea and the Jungle*, takes us with him to the crater of a volcano at the other end of the world.

The tendency among the ablest American short-story writers to turn to novel writing and to excel at it has been recently illustrated by Fannie Hurst and Edna Ferber; and now ***Harvey O'Higgins***, author of *From the Life* and *Some Distinguished Americans*, two unusual collections of brief stories, is likewise, with *Julie Cane*, showing his surpassing skill in the wider field.

Alan Burroughs, curator of paintings at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, contributes a page of information about the masterpiece on the cover of the Magazine.

When visiting British critics on their way up New York harbor are interviewed upon American poetry, ***Carl Sandburg's*** name is invariably mentioned: not only because of the originality of his verse on unusual (and often ugly) subjects, but because he has come to be regarded in England as well as in the United States as a leading exponent of radical technic. In addition, he is a Chicago newspaper man, a folk-song recitalist, and the author of the *Rootabaga* books for children. ❦ ❦ Among the other poets of the month is ***Margaret Widdemer***, who is well known also as a novelist. ❦ ❦ ***John Hall Wheelock*** works at the Scribner publishing offices by day and writes poetry by night, his latest volume being *The Black Panther*. ❦ ❦ ***Corinne Reinheimer*** is connected with an advertising agency in New York City. ❦ ❦ ***Anne Goodwin Winslow***, of Raleigh, Tennessee, has had much verse published in contemporary magazines; she wrote "An Alpine Village" on a recent European trip. ❦ ❦ ***Laura Spencer Portor*** (Mrs. Francis Pope) of the editorial staff of the *Woman's Home Companion* is an accomplished writer of both verse and fiction, and illustrates her versatility by appearing this month as a contributor also to the "Lion's Mouth." ❦ ❦ ***Sylvia Morris*** is the pen name of a young writer whose unusual work was brought to our attention by Mr. O'Higgins.

The "Lion's Mouth" is also fed this month by ***Philip Curtiss***, whose struggles with the mysteries of English currency are held at Norfolk, Connecticut; and by ***Marian Storm*** of New York, who contributes from time to time to HARPER'S and other magazines.

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The second competition in the Short Story Contest will have closed by the time this is printed; but the field is still open to new writers who wish to win their spurs, for the third competition will not close until September 30, and the fourth and last will run from October 1 to December 31. In each competition a first prize of $1,250, a second prize of $750, and a third prize of $500 will be awarded. Meredith Nicholson, Zona Gale, and Bliss Perry will continue as Judges. Full information about the conditions of the Contest will be sent on application to the Magazine, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City.

HARPER readers may look forward to the publication of a prize story, along with other American and English fiction, in every issue of the Magazine throughout the next twelve months.

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Space does not permit the publication now of correspondence about all recent articles which has poured into the HARPER office, but the response to Rollo Walter Brown's "Coeducation and Literature" has been so general and so enthusiastic that we must quote from it. Much evidence has been submitted in support of Professor Brown's arguments. One man in a Middle Western state university testifies that he was the only man out of fifty students in a course on Tennyson; another was the only man in a class of fifty. A professor reports sixty women in a nineteenth-century literature course, and *no men*.

"Everybody," says Professor Brown, "is writing to ask if segregation in the classroom will help. It will; but it will not solve the problem completely. The tradition on the campus—the unofficial tradition—is too strong."